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[For information on the preparation and writing of this work by members of the Federal Writers' Project, see Category 121.]

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121 in which children walked miles to rickety schools and the elderly walked miles to rickety churches. It was a world in which farmers borrowed small sums at indefinite rates of interest and lost their lands at indefinite rates of foreclosure. The major impact of the Great Depression on this world of perpetual depression was to bring in fieldworkers from the Federal Writers' Project.[3]

•114 *Drums and Shadows* was sparsely reviewed at the time and did not enjoy large sales. The *New York Times Book Review* buried its notice on page 17, and the critic damned the book with faint praise. In a joint review of *Drums and Shadows* and Mason Crum's *Gullah*, C. McD. Puckette said that both books performed "a real service to folklore." He lamented that the "generation of Negroes raised under the tutelage of former slaves is thinning and sophistication is coming even to the last point of the outermost barrier island." And he praised the interviewers who "convince one that a faithful task has been done and Georgia can justly be gratified at this addition to the annals of the State." By comparison with Crum's book, he said that *Drums and Shadows* "covers the fresher ground only because fewer chronicles have recorded the stories of Sapelo, St. Simon's and St. Mary's."[4]

121 114 THE IMPORTANCE OF *Drums and Shadows* is much clearer in retrospect. It was the pioneering book in demonstrating the continuing, living influence of African folklore among Afro-Americans, not through bits and pieces of shadowy survivals gathered in small numbers over scattered wide areas, but through concrete examples gathered in massive quantities within a small area of the United States. In his foreword the sociologist Guy B. Johnson termed it "probably the most thorough search for African heritages among Negroes in a small area that has ever been attempted in this country up to the present time."[5] The Savannah Unit was aware that the local folklore collected on the Georgia coast had implications extending far beyond the state of Georgia. The writers pre-

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sented their material in the explicit hope that it might be "useful as an outline for further investigations in this and related fields."[6]

In choosing to focus on African survivals, *Drums and Shadows* was consciously departing from a generation of scholarly consensus in the fields of history, folklore, sociology, and anthropology. The leading university historian of the Afro-American experience in slavery was Yale's Georgia-born scholar Ulrich Bonnell Phillips. His *American Negro Slavery*, published in 1918, remained the standard work on the subject until the 1950s.[7] Studies of Georgia slavery by Ralph Betts Flanders and Albert H. Stoddard were written in the Phillips tradition.[8] In *American Negro Slavery*, Phillips revealed a certain ambivalence regarding the amount of African inheritance by Afro-Americans. Occasionally he seemed to believe in African cultural continuity among the slaves. "While produced only in America," he wrote, "the plantation slave was a product of old world forces. His nature was an African's profoundly modified but hardly transformed by the requirements of European civilization. The wrench from Africa and the subjection to the new discipline while uprooting his ancient language and customs had little more effect upon his temperament than upon his complexion." Yet only a few sentences later Phillips quoted with approval a saying of the slaveholders that "a negro was what a white man made him." On the slave plantation, the slave left Africa behind. "Ceasing to be Foulah, Coramantee, Ebo or Angola, he became instead the American negro."[9] In any event, Phillips's view of Africa was terribly negative. "No people is without its philosophy and religion," he admitted, but "of all regions of extensive habitation equatorial Africa is the worst." As for the Africans, "the climate in fact not only discourages but prohibits mental effort of severe or sustained character, and the negroes have submitted to that prohibition as to many others, through countless generations, with excellent grace." Such

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114 Herskovits and Johnson were not the only advisors chosen by the *Drums and Shadows* team. Among other outside consultants were the anthropologist William R. Bascom, the sociologist Charles S. Johnson, the folklorist Newbell Niles Puckett, the linguist Lorenzo Dow Turner, and the poet Sterling Brown. Three of the consultants—Johnson, Turner, and Brown—were black. Brown was perhaps the most influential upon the Savannah Unit. In his poetry he had already moved away from the pseudo-folk persona of the minstrel-show tradition to an authentic black folk voice. Perhaps the more literary orientation of the Savannah Unit gave Brown greater influence upon them than the social scientists could exert. The Georgia fieldworkers would have been familiar with a tradition in Afro-American literature that extolled—however equivocally—the African inheritance. Alain Locke had spoken ambivalently in 1925 of black Americans as "the advance guard of the African peoples in their contact with Twentieth Century civilization." In the same year Countee Cullen's poem "Heritage" proposed that a black God would better understand the Afro-American's roots in Africa and anomalous position in America. Even earlier, in 1921, Langston Hughes had published a Whitmanesque identification with his African ancestors:

> I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.
> I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.
> I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.
> . . . . . .
> My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

126 Muriel and Malcolm Bell, photographers for *Drums and Shadows*, were inspired by their literary reference point to see Robert Lucas, whom they photographed at St. Marys, in the context of Richard Wright's Bigger Thomas. And they saw Katie Brown in the context of William Faulkner's Dilsey.[29]

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among the Georgia Coastal Negroes are not peculiar to them. Indeed, many of these traits, such as the belief in ghosts, witches, and conjure, are either known or practiced by thousands of white and Negro people in other parts of the United States; while the dogmas and methods of Father Divine and Bishop Grace seem to flourish best among the proletariat of Harlem, Chicago, Detroit, Washington, Richmond, and other urban centers. Nevertheless, one finds much in these pages which is new, and one senses the great virility of old heritages in the daily lives of the coastal Negroes.

Drums and Shadows makes no pretense of offering a complete picture of the life and culture of these people, but limits its scope of inquiry to certain definite types. In undertaking the work, Miss Granger, the supervisor, also wisely refrained from attempting to include an investigation of subjects like folk music and dialect, which require special training and technical analysis. The visits, interviews, and observations were made by the workers on the Georgia Writers' Project. The investigators were enthusiastic and persistent, and, in spite of the fact that they had had no formal training in ethnological methods, they have made a real contribution to knowledge. They have recorded what is probably the most thorough search for African heritages among Negroes in a small area that has ever been attempted in this country up to the present time.

This question of the nature and importance of African heritage in America bids fair to develop into something of a controversy. At one extreme are scholars like Robert E. Park and E. B. Reuter who would not even consider the matter debatable since they virtually deny the existence of *any* significant Africanisms in the United States. Toward the other extreme is Melville J. Herskovits, who believes that African heritages are very significant, that they have contributed much to the culture of white America, and that the

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FOREWORD

study of these heritages may point the way to racial understanding and the alleviation of friction between the races in the United States. My own position lies somewhere between these two, since I believe that there are a few important African survivals in the United States, but that the degree of significance of these African heritages is questionable in view of the overwhelming tendency of the culture of the white man to displace the Negro's African culture, and that their influence on the everyday problem of race relations is relatively inconsequential.

However, regardless of differences of opinion as to the nature and importance of African heritages in our civilization, almost everyone would agree that the question is interesting and worthy of study. Such study may not only satisfy a wholesome curiosity but may throw light on the scientific problem of the processes which go on when two different cultures come into contact. In dealing with the material collected for this book, Miss Granger makes no decision as to the African sources of particular traits. She has, however, included a valuable appendix on West African culture patterns and has cited therein numerous possible parallels between these patterns and the culture of Georgia coastal Negroes.

Drums and Shadows will interest the scholar as well as the general reader, for it has combed over a strategic area, has discovered clues, has raised problems, and thus made easier the way of any cultural anthropologist who might want to follow and attempt a definitive scientific study of the question of African heritages and influences in American civilization.

GUY B. JOHNSON
University of North Carolina
1940

[p. xxxvi is blank]

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Wilmington Island

115 UNCLE JACK TATTNALL* AND UNCLE ROBERT PINCK-
226 ney ** are river men. For many years they have earned a frugal living by casting for shrimp or crabbing or fishing in the Wilmington River. Apparently they are in little fear of the elements. Winter or summer, at whatever hour of the day or night the tide is "right," they are on the water in their bateaux.

311 Many of the Wilmington Island Negroes depend upon the
461 river for their livelihood. In leisure hours, here as in other sections, skillful fingers carve or weave to pass the time away.
322 We were fortunate in being shown a walking stick (Plate
532 IIb), carved some years before by an old fisherman of the
481 island.† The delicately detailed figure of a human being formed a third of the stick, with hair, features, fingers, and shoes carefully executed. The narrow thin figure stood stiffly gowned in a garment edged with a saw-tooth design.

124 For some time we had been anxious to obtain interviews with Uncle Jack and Uncle Robert, who were among the oldest inhabitants of Wilmington Island, in order that we might learn something regarding beliefs and customs that had been handed down to them. Until the present time, we had met with little success.

124 A barbecue to be held in the side yard of Celia Small, one
▲ 114 of the islanders, at last gave us the long hoped for opportunity of meeting a number of the residents at one time.

* *Jack Tattnall, Wilmington Island.*
** *Robert Pinckney, Thunderbolt.*
† *Property of Edward A. Sieg, 128 West Jones Street, Savannah.*

A, [See Category 322, plate following p. xxxii-B--Analyst]

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124 When we arrived, it was just getting dark. Black masses of
•114 trees were outlined against the sky. To the south a shining river curved into shadows. A little wind blowing up from the marsh tasted of salt.

The party was in full swing. Small groups clustered about the open fire, chatting amiably and tending the juicy pork which was slowly roasting on a grill. The light of the fire lit up the shiny black faces and touched here and there on a bright blouse or turban.

115 Uncle Jack, tall, bony-framed and lanky, had worn his usual workaday clothes to the party. His kindly, near-sighted eyes shone with excitement. Uncle Robert, small and spry, had dressed up in honor of the occasion. He was [291] conspicuously proud of his derby hat, neatly brushed and cleaned. It was about two sizes too large and came down to Uncle Robert's ears at the sides and to his eyebrows in front, but, almost new, it gave the old man a certain air of assurance and seemed to make him forget that his brown suit was faded and well worn.

When the opening merriment had somewhat subsided, the crackling of pork fat and the smell of hot yams drew the party around the fire where Uncle Jack and Uncle Robert were exchanging reminiscences of old times. For the most part the others listened, occasionally interjecting a sentence or two.

We asked how long the old men had lived on the island and Uncle Jack answered, "All muh life I lib right yuh on Wilmington Ilun. Bawn yuh an nebuh want tuh lib no place else. I got ebryting I want right yuh."

Uncle Robert, who was eighty-one, about ten years older than Uncle Jack, said that he had come to the island from Clinch County just before the War between the States.

The long journey undertaken so many years ago had made a vivid impression on him. With a far-away expression in his eyes, the old man told us about that trip.

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description of the geography, demography, and economic and social history of the region, because only in an environment like that of the Sea Islands could the inhabitants have maintained the level of continuity with African culture that has been recorded (and that surely remains to be recorded).

Chapters 2 and 3 constitute the greatest portion of the book. Chapter 2 provides detailed descriptions of the settings in which the tales are told and the telling techniques employed, and sketches of some of the most prolific storytellers. Chapter 3 is composed of Gullah prayers and tales, with translations of some African counterparts. This section may be particularly pleasing to those interested in seeing just how closely the Gullah tales compare with African narratives.

Chapter 4 provides a description of those linguistic features in contemporary Gullah speech which have African parallels. This chapter may be especially useful in helping to delineate features characteristic of Gullah and not characteristic of inland African-American speech or of other speech varieties in the United States. In addition to providing insights into the status of present-day Gullah on the Sea Islands, Chapter 4 is germane to the interested reader's understanding of certain linguistic features of the Gullah speech samples.

Most often we get only a retrospective look at a culture after many of its unique features have been lost. One of the great attractions of the Sea Islands for students of the humanities and social sciences is that the expected slow pace of change in remote areas will permit a look into the culture as it undergoes transition. As outside forces erode the traditional social structure of the islanders, every attempt should be made to maintain a record of changing language, attitudes, and oral traditions. And as I hope to show in this book, researchers who come with the right preparation and receptive minds can make their studies as rewarding for the islanders as for the investigators.

In my own case, I decided that given the wide field of untapped resources in the Sea Island area, it would be wise to undertake my investigation in collaboration with a colleague from a field other than linguistics. Behavioral data, whether dealing with folklore, language, cognition, or their interrelationships, have in the past tended to be rigidly segmented and compartmentalized into folklore, linguistics, psychology, sociology, or anthropology. The needs for interdisciplinary approaches to the study of human behavior, however, and for ex-

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changes of information and ideas among scholars in related fields, are becoming increasingly more apparent.[1]

Accordingly, during the first two years of my research on the Sea Islands, I worked with Faith Mitchell, an anthropologist who had spent several years in the area. Faith's assistance in helping me to understand the similarities and differences between Sea Island practices and those of certain peoples of Africa was invaluable. She introduced me to several families in the Wadmalaw community and pointed out such African survivals in the culture as iron casting, fishing techniques, and family practices that she, as an anthropologist, recognized quickly but I, as a linguist, did not.

The interdisciplinary approach also provided reciprocal rewards for her. Since "root medicine" always generated lively conversation, I often used it as a topic for gathering linguistic data. Faith accompanied me on what she called my "collecting trips," became interested in the topic, and later wrote a book on the subject called *Hoodoo Medicine*.

Any attempt to study a culture without adequate knowledge of its language, social structure, and history will be abortive, producing disappointing results. To avoid this danger, I decided to familiarize myself with as much of the literature of the Sea Island area as possible by preparing a bibliography of readings in linguistics, literature, anthropology, folklore, history, and sociology. In assembling a working bibliography, I included such sources as travel guides, local newspapers, magazines, dialect dictionaries, government reports, and miscellaneous publications of local societies. Information from sources of this nature will often, I learned, give detail to geography, climatic conditions, food sources, drug use, towns, cities, ocean and bridge conditions, and the like, in addition to suggesting social contacts.[2]

One usually arrives at a research design or an objective through intense reading and inquiry into one's target area. Without such theoretical preparation, one will have little, if any, idea what problems need solving. It took an immersion in the historical circumstances that have produced the language and culture of the Sea Islands to make me satisfied that I would recognize an Africanism when I heard one. In any research study, of course, defining and analyzing the research design before field exploration begins will both expose facts relevant to solving the problem and determine the methods and approaches which are likely to be most effective for the study. One has to decide where the work will be done, the probable time necessary for effective inves-

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In Memoriam

•114 She was beautiful. That was the first thing most people noticed about Patricia Jones-Jackson. Those who knew her found her inner beauty—her charm and kindness and intelligence—even more striking than her appearance. Hers was a very special grace.

She was born on August 14, 1946, in Arkansas and died on June 29, 1986, from injuries received in an automobile accident the day before on Johns Island, South Carolina. She is survived by her husband, Sidney, and three children: fourteen-year-old Patricia Antonia, eleven-year-old Sidney, and four-year-old Brie Ann. An orphaned nephew, eighteen-year-old Benjie Jackson, is also part of her family.

Her death cut short an academic career of unusual promise. She graduated from the University of Detroit in 1970. She earned her Ph.D. in linguistics at the University of Michigan in 1978 with a dissertation entitled "The Status of Gullah: An Investigation of Convergent Processes." The excellence of her dissertation and of her articles in *Anthropological Linguistics* and *The Journal of Religious Thought* led to her appointment to the faculty of Howard University, where she was a member of the English department at the time of her death.

Patricia Jones-Jackson was a gifted scholar who was equally at home in the library or in the field. In fact, she was engaged in fieldwork—on assignment for the *National Geographic Magazine*—when she died. The ability to write rich, clear English prose is infrequent. The ability to perform truly interdisciplinary analysis is even less common. The ability to do both at the same time is rare. Patricia will be remembered best by the scholarly world not just for her analytical acumen or her writing style but for her great love and respect for the people whose language and culture she studied and wrote about. This book is her legacy to the scholarly world of which she was a part and to those Gullah-speaking people into whose lives she came.

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123 (609) early twentieth century.[2] Thus they are quite naturally suspicious of anyone taking notes, carrying equipment, or wandering about unaccompanied by a resident. The islanders are a proud, perceptive people and can very soon sense insincerity and patronizing attitudes. It generally requires more than an offer of cash payment, gifts, or other remunerations to motivate them to assist a researcher's study. Though it was not my original plan to become indoctrinated into Sea Island (461) culture through hard labor, I learned very quickly that most of the islanders are active, "going" people. Those who are not engaged in city jobs are likely to be fishermen, farmers, carpenters, housewives, basket weavers, market people, or laborers in the produce fields. Often workers allowed me to accompany and assist them, and I found that the rewards for becoming involved in daily life through hard work were great indeed. Returning home from a day in the fields in an open-bed truck, listening to the islanders laughing, joking, and planning for the weekend, made the tasks I had accomplished that day seem easier. Equally important, I obtained some of the most interesting speech data while learning to make baskets or working in an okra field.

• 114 After five years of gathering information on the Sea Islands, I went to Africa in 1978 to compare the Sea Islanders' language and culture with the patterns of some of their ancestors. The Nigerian villagers' welcome was far warmer on my first introduction to their communities than the Sea Islanders' had been. Many of the elderly Igbo, Yoruba, and Ibebio women had never seen an African-American woman and walked some distances to see the *Indocha*, or what was termed a "white-black woman." The label was used not out of disrespect but for lack of a better one to refer to a person born from African heritage but raised speaking a European tongue. After I explained my purpose for coming far "across the water," I was never in need of anyone to assist in any efforts. The villagers were as eager to hear what words, customs, and traditions the Gullah speakers retained as I was to tell them. Their eagerness was sharpened by their fervent hope that somehow some of the language, literary traditions, and social customs had derived from their particular culture, whether Igbo, Yoruba, or Ibebio. Life among these people was fascinating and amazingly similar in some ways to the life patterns of the Sea Islanders, even after the passage of centuries. It is about these similarities in language, literature, and culture that I promised to write this book.

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know. . . . I really don't know why they speaks that way. I don't . . . I don't guess too many people do know why. . . . But I be knowing it's not the water. It doesn't . . . I mean what goes into your system, it comes out on the other end. I mean that . . . this don't damage the brain, or vocal cord, or anything like that.

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Some serious studies of Gullah were undertaken during the first half of the twentieth century, but most of them were linguistically prejudiced. Scholars such as George P. Krapp, Reed Smith, and H. L. Mencken treated the language as a corrupted and intrinsically inferior dialect of English.[4] A. E. Gonzales, a journalist and untrained linguist, provided the most biased and perhaps the most inaccurate linguistic account: "Slovenly and careless of speech, these Gullahs seized upon the peasant English used by some of the early settlers and by the white servants of the wealthier colonist, wrapped their clumsy tongues about it as well as they could, and enriched with certain expressive African words, it issued through their flat noses, and thick lips."[5]

Convictions such as this one were easily refuted by later studies. Lorenzo Turner wrote in 1949: "Up to the present time I have found in the vocabulary of the Negroes in the coastal South Carolina and Georgia approximately four thousand West African words, besides many survivals in syntax, inflections, sounds and intonation. . . . I have recorded in Georgia a few songs the words of which are entirely African."[6] Since Turner's study, most research on Gullah has recognized its legitimacy as a linguistic system. However, no one has studied all of the various categories which are components of any language. As a result of the recent focus on the study of inland black speech in the United States, new curricula have been developed, better teacher-training programs have been implemented, and some negative attitudes have been reversed, not only for black students but for all students who speak nonstandard varieties of English.[7] Given the record associated with the study of "proper" or standard English usage, these accomplishments are no small feats. But not enough work has yet been done on Gullah.

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S 551 are among those names whose roots are traceable to West African languages. Some older island residents are named after the day of the week or month of the year when they were born. While it is very European to ask, with Shakespeare, "What's in a name?" it is very African to answer, "Everything is in a name." For example, the name Ada given to a girl child in Igbo means that the girl is the firstborn daughter. It is customary for Igbo children to be named after days of the week or given names that express sentiment: a woman who has long been unable to conceive might name a child finally born to her Ngozi, for instance, meaning "blessing" in Igbo. Some linguists have challenged Turner's work, claiming that most of the four thousand Africanisms that he listed were nicknames, or what the islanders call "basket" names.[11] Yet as DeCamp so aptly states, "Names are also a part of language and are no less capable of preserving an African heritage than are common nouns."[12]

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Many of the "old words"—Africanisms—known to the older island residents are, with the "new talk," fading from use. A number of idioms are still very much apparent in daily communication, however. Consider the following list:

S 195

dark the light: the sun was set
out the light: turn the light out
hot the water: bring the water to a boil
ugly too much: very ugly
the old man bury: the old man is dead
this side: this island
do the fect to you: cause harm to come to you
can't bring the word right now: I can't remember at the moment, or I will not speak of it at this time
pull off my hat: I had to run
de fix for you: lie in wait for you
watchitsir!: watch your step!
day clean: daybreak
clean skin: a person with light skin color
one day mong all!: finally!
nothing for dead: nothing dying
the sun de red for down: sunset
knock em: hit
sweetmouth: flatter

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Notes

Preface

1. For a note on the usefulness of interdisciplinary approaches see David DeCamp, "Toward a Generative Analysis of a Post-Creole Speech Continuum," in *Pidginization and Creolization of Languages*, ed. Dell Hymes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 369.

2. For a detailed discussion of field procedures in general see Kenneth Goldstein, *A Guide for Field Workers in Folklore* (Hatboro, N.C.: Folklore Assoc., 1964).

3. See ibid., p. 21.

4. Juanita Jackson, Sabra Slaughter, and J. Herman Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," *Black Scholar*, March 1974, pp. 32–39.

5. For further discussion of entrance into Sea Island communities see Patricia Nichols, "Linguistic Change in Gullah: Sex, Age, and Mobility" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1976).

6. Goldstein, *Guide for Field Workers*, p. 173.

Introduction

1. The titles *Mr.* and *Miss* have more significance in Sea Island communities than they do outside. They are used in daily interaction with those who are felt to have earned particular respect, becoming part of their names.

2. See Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), pp. 11–12.

Chapter 1

1. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," p. 32.

2. These estimates were derived primarily from the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester (BCD) Council of Governments' *Report on Economically Less Developed Areas in the Berkeley Charleston Dorchester Region*, 1980.

3. For a detailed discussion of the folk life and language of Sandy Island and the

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31. See Cronise and Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit*.

32. See Finnegan, *Limba Stories;* and Cronise and Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit*.

33. See Harris, *Nights with Uncle Remus;* and Martha Warren Beckwith, *Jamaica Anansi Stories* (New York: American Folklore Society, 1924).

34. See Dorson, *African Folklore;* and Parsons, *Folklore of the Sea Islands*.

Chapter 4

101 175 567

1. On *Gullah* see Wood, *Black Majority*, p. 335. For *Geechee* see Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 194. As many as 70 percent of the slaves brought to the Sea Islands may have come from Angola. As far back as 1822, the Charleston City Council regarded the word *Gullah* as a corruption of *Angola*. John G. Williams wrote in the *Charleston Sunday News*, 10 February 1895: "Gullah is very probably a corruption of Angola, shortened to Gola, a country of West Africa, and part of Lower Guinea, from which a great many negroes were brought to this country in the days of the slave trade. I remember hearing the old plantation negroes before the war speak of one as a 'Gullah nigger' and another as a 'Guinea nigger.' " When members of the Georgia Writers Project of 1940 asked an elderly man if he could remember any of the people brought over from Africa, he replied: " 'Yas, I know heaps ub um. Deah wuz "Golla" John Wiley, "Golla" Jim Bayfield—he wuz bought by Mahse Charles Lamar, and he sole im to Mr. McMullen. Den deah wuz "Golla" Jack, "Golla" Tom, "Golla" Silvie, "Golla" Charles Carr. . . . All duh people wut come frum Africa aw obushseas wuz call "Golla," and dey talk wuz call "Golla" talk' " (*Drums and Shadows*, p. 66).

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2. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

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3. Water is symbolic of life, happiness, and goodwill on the Sea Islands, and water from certain areas on the islands is felt to have curative properties. Thus Francis's reply is not without some merit.

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4. For early studies on Gullah see George Phillip Krapp, "The English of the American Negro," *American Mercury* 2 (June 1924): 190–95; Reed Smith, *Gullah*, Bulletin of the University of South Carolina, no. 190 (Columbia: *University of South Carolina Press*, 1926); and H. L. Mencken, *The American Language: Supplement II* (New York: Knopf, 1942).

5. Ambrose E. Gonzales, *The Black Border* (Columbia, S.C.: The State Co., 1922), p. 10.

6. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 296.

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7. To take one interesting example of nonstandard speech, Ian Hancock has recently informed me that an African-Seminole variety of English is spoken in Oklahoma and Texas. This mixture is unsurprising: Africans and Indians have coexisted since the beginning of foreign migrations into America.

8. See Irma Cunningham, "A Syntactic Analysis of Sea Island Creole (Gullah)." (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan; 1970); Nichols, *Linguistic Change in Gullah;* Joyner, "Slave Folklife," or *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 196–224; and Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah."

9. See DeCamp, "Toward a Generative Analysis."

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10. The African derivations of these words are from Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

11. For a critical appraisal of Turner's methodology see P. E. H. Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in the Gullah Dialect of American English," *African Language Review* 4 (1965): 79–84.

12. DeCamp, Foreword to Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, pp. vii–viii.

13. For a detailed discussion of the processes involved in language contact see Talmy Givón, "Prolegomena to Any Creology" (Department of Linguistics, University of California, Los Angeles, Mimeo, 1973).

14. According to Wolfram (personal communication), the "matrix of cruciality" refers to linguistic features that are important to control in situations where one would be expected to use a form of standard English.

15. For a fuller syntactical analysis of Gullah than follows here, see Cunningham, "Syntactic Analysis." See Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah," for a full representation of creole features in context.

16. See Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 225.

17. See Dietrich Westermann and M. A. Bryan, *The Languages of West Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1952).

18. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 211.

19. See Nichols, "Linguistic Change in Gullah," for a detailed discussion and historical analysis of the complementizer *for*.

20. J. L. Dillard, *Black English* (New York: Random House, 1972).

Appendix 1

1. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource."

Appendix 3

1. For a full discussion of the phonemes in Gullah, see Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah," and Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

Appendix 4

1. All quotations in this appendix are from the film documentary *When Roots Die*, produced by me in conjunction with WHMM TV at Howard University and the South Carolina ETV network. I owe special thanks to Charles Sessoms, who helped to write and who directed the film. Likewise, I am indebted to Henry Cauthens, director of the South Carolina ETV network, for providing a crew (Patrice Abrams, Jimmy Dinkins, and Joe Bowie) to undertake the filming in South Carolina; and to Edward Hawthorne, dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, and Arnold Wallace, general manager of WHMM TV, Howard University, for providing the funds.

2. Robert Browne, founder of the National Emergency Land Fund and research scholar for the Black Economic Research Center (personal communication).

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sensitivity. Many thanks to Professor Velma Pollard of the University of the West Indies, for sharing with me her impressive knowledge of linguistic patterns in the black diaspora. Discussions with Joseph Holloway of California State University, Northridge, concerning African influences among the Gullahs were productive and stimulating. Although our opinions differ, I believe we learned from each other, and we concur in the belief that there is still much to be uncovered regarding the African impact on African-American life, thought and culture. A special note of thanks to Peter Wood of Duke University. He read two versions of the manuscript and offered his expertise on the African-Carolina experience during the colonial era. Professor Wood's penetrating insights and suggestions lead to fruitful rethinking in a number of areas.

This study began as a dissertation under the direction of Professors Daniel H. Calhoun and Daniel Crowley at the University of California, Davis, and Professor Leon F. Litwack at the University of California, Berkeley. I am particularly grateful for Professor Calhoun's advice and encouragement during my years as his student, and for his continued belief in the worthiness of this subject. Professor Crowley's anthropological input was invaluable. More significantly, whenever the vastness and controversial nature of this project seemed overwhelming, I recalled his comment to me when I first embarked on the project: "You're on to something."

The enthusiasm, intelligence and perception of many of my graduate students in the antebellum history and Afro-American history seminars at UCLA was inspiring. In those courses we raised probing questions about religion, culture, community and politics which I hope have made this a better volume. My right hand in the project was Jill Marie Watts. As my research assistant for three years, Ms. Watts' library detective work went well beyond my expectations. For typing and word processing assistance I wish to thank Alesia Barbour, and UCLA's Central Word Processing Center, especially Nancy Rahn. While I received valuable comments, suggestions, and advice, I have also been selective in adhering to recommentations regarding the book. Thus I am fully responsible for any limitations contained herein.

Members of my family, as always, were a source of strength. My two children, James and Céleste Creel, never ceased to add color and zest to life. They accepted my preoccupation with unusual patience. My niece, Anita Louise Crawford, was a wonderful surrogate mother when needed,

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the African tradition and the "spiritual strivings" of African-Americans. He was also a pioneer in expressing the historic role and significance of black religion as a means of political protest. And Sterling Brown, another sage of African-American cultural thought, observed over forty years ago, that much could be learned of black life-style and values through studying the folklore of slaves. Brown, one of the earliest interpreters of black thought, viewed folktales, spirituals and narratives as historical documents that spoke "with convincing finality against the legend of contented slavery." Thus more recent scholarship on the slave community, from which my own work draws directly, is part of a tradition begun with the exploratory works of African-American writers of previous generations. Among current scholars, perhaps the most extensive elaboration of the importance of black culture as a means of delving into the black mind-set is provided by Lawrence Levine in *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*. Levine's seminal work provides an impressive continuum for probing black culture and black thought through analysis of slave folk beliefs, spirituals, and African-American fusion of the sacred and secular. Levine's general discussions of the significance of African traditions and behavior patterns among bondspeople is supported in the particular case of the Gullahs. He debates, as I do, the contention that slaves did not oppose bondage and he maintains that if historians cannot perceive the "sacred universe created by slaves as a serious alternative to the societal system created by southern slaveholders," it is perhaps the historians' problem and not the slaves'.[5]

My book is a regionally limited and more concentrated study involving only the period of enslavement. Levine's work permeates myriad areas of black thought, encompassing bondage *and* freedom, allowing for an emphasis somewhat different from mine and for a greater range of cultural and aesthetic treatment. Bondage takes up only two, albeit important, trend-setting chapters of *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*. My attention focuses on a full interpretation of one group's spiritual experience in a manner not previously explored. For instance, I see evidence of a strong New Testament ideology and outlook among the Gullahs as they embraced Christianity. Levine does not ignore this impact, but sees more Old Testament messages in general African-American consciousness.[6] Additionally, my work discusses the means by which slaves may have forged African sacred-secular traditions and offers explanations about *how* meanings of religious symbols and rituals related to social processes

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and community structure. Ultimately my study presents an amplification of rather than disagreement with most of Lawrence Levine's interpretations. Our methods are not always comparable yet our motivations seem to grow from similar concerns and lead to complementary conclusions—at least in terms of the bondage experience.

A pioneering and, for me, encouraging work on slave religion is Albert J. Raboteau's *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South*. Raboteau writes that one purpose of his book was to provide a "rough sketch for further, more exhaustive examination" of slave religion.[7] Nearly a decade has passed since his book was first published. Slave religion, though considered the pillar of African-American culture, remains largely unexplored through historical scholarship (even Raboteau's background was in religious studies).[8]

Thematically, Raboteau's book and mine run parallel: the African heritage, slave conversion, religious life in the slave community, and the relationship of religion to resistance. Yet we treat these issues differently. In his early chapter entitled "Death of the Gods," Raboteau summarily states that certain factors "tended to inhibit the survival of African culture and religion in the United States." Whatever African influences remained, says Raboteau, are found in "spirituals, ring shouts and folk beliefs." In the case of Gullahs, and perhaps other slave communities, his two contentions seem contradictory.[9] Spirituals, the ring shout, and folk beliefs tell us most of what we know (at least from the Gullahs themselves) about Gullah religion. These cultural traits move us as close, perhaps, as we can come to understanding a *black Weltanschauung*, and they were intrinsic to Gullah religion. If we probe folk religion and culture, it leads to some general insights, as Levine demonstrated, about slave religion. I examine the manifestations and meanings (as symbols and rituals) of various elements of Gullah folk belief. Then I compare my hypotheses with African spiritualism, cosmology, and other beliefs. I do not argue for "survivals," a somewhat lifeless term implying passive existence. But I do argue for the presence of dynamic, creative, cultural trends of African provenance among the Gullahs, which they adapted to their concept of Christianity and integrated into New World black collective consciousness.

Raboteau and I both expend much energy on the slave conversion process because it is crucial to the black religious experience in America. On this issue we are probably in closer, though not complete agreement.

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Christianity was capable, says Raboteau, of "producing a Christian social order based on the observance of mutual duty, slave to master and master to slave."[10] I found however, an abundance of literature on the "duty" of the former, but comparatively little on the "duty" of the latter. Certainly, a liberal attitude existed in the religious sector of the South—probably the only sector where such ideas could survive. Raboteau provides an excellent treatment of eighteenth-century religious activity. Early Methodism is the best, though not the only example of religious liberalism. The emergence of a few independent black churches is another. In the mid nineteenth-century Lowcountry, this tradition was to some extent epitomized by Methodist lay preachers who supplied the plantation missions.[11] As far as slaveholders and most regular clergy were concerned however, amelioration of bondage via religion was a minor consideration when compared to the influence of social control ideology. Raboteau seems to argue for balance between white conversion of slaves for moral and spiritual reasons and the use of Christianity to encourage docility and submission. That may have been true for the South in general. I do not ignore the white moral and spiritual imperative, but the weight of the argument in coastal South Carolina leans heavily toward the use of religion to encourage submissive personalities.

Raboteau understandably desires to "preserve the texture of slave testimony and to avoid forcing the experience reflected in that testimony into any preconceived theoretical framework."[12] I also try and conserve the historical reality of the black religious experience. However I saw important elements in the Gullah experience in need of interpretation and I sometimes practiced what some scholars have called imaginary reconstruction of historical facts.[13] When empirical data implied theoretical constructions or thematic conclusions I did not avoid hermeneutics. This is most obvious in the difference between Raboteau's and my treatment of two issues—religious life and rebellion. Our conclusions are, I think, somewhat similar. Our methodologies and discussions of operative, determining forces that explain these phenomena differ. Also (as is the case with Levine's work), our emphasis differs. One obvious explanation for this is that I am writing about a community, not the entire slave South. Yet contrasts go deeper than that. Raboteau sees a complex ambiguity in slave life and religious orientation which supports accommodation as well as rebelliousness, and which ultimately offered "freedom," and "transcendence" for the "individual."[14] Certainly among the Gullahs a range

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of responses to religion existed. But *particular* responses predominated and I emphasize these. Thus I structurally explore and interpret not only the spiritual experience, but religion as a *determining factor* in Gullah ideas of liberation, resistance-culture, and community organization. Although my book is primarily historical, it also addresses psychological, sociological, and anthropological issues. That apparently is not Raboteau's intention. Thus, thematic similarity between the two books is deceiving. Still, Raboteau's fruitful beginning furnished grounding for my study and hopefully, for others, in an area of black history worthy of and needing much more examination.

Two other scholars deserve mention here even though their major works are not directly on slave religion. My work has been influenced by Vincent Harding because he places the historical black experience in progressive-nationalistic, radical-protest, freedom-quest perspectives. His book, *There Is a River*,[15] is a poetic, apocalyptic historical message that *struggle*, more than "survival," permeated black motivations in the North and South, among slave and free. Harding's work is a statement that may ostensibly address a black popular audience.[16] Yet it is no less a significant contribution to the historical literature.

The late Herbert Gutman's *Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750–1925* explores black cultural beliefs and behavior as well as examines the black family. And if black religion is one key to the nature of black life and culture, the black "family," despite historical (and present-day) assaults, is the other. Gutman analyzes the adaptive nature of black culture, specifically patterns of family cohesion. Yet researching familial associations involved investigating origins of marrying practices and ceremonies, belief systems, kin obligations versus decisions to flee, child-rearing practices, sexuality, and collective organization. Gutman is exceptional in inquiring into the African past and relating this to the above deterministic features of black culture.[17] No historian has made such frontal attempts to integrate specific aspects of Africanity into the historical functioning of the black family.

Eugene Genovese's *Roll, Jordan, Roll* set the tone for a more conservative view of slave life: slaves "accommodated" their bondage, masters were "paternalists" who exercised their "hegemonic" power with a sense of "duty" and "burden."[18] *Roll, Jordan, Roll* is a culminating achievement based on years of research and writing centered around issues related to the above concepts, and despite its conservative conclusions, is part of

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the essentially progressive "community-and-culture" historiography of the 1970s.[19] Genovese presents a dramatic, panoramic view of slave life and culture, engulfed in a Christian motif. Through abundant documentary evidence, he offers an engrossing but challenging (not to mention disturbing) exploratory interpretation of the Old South. Within these frameworks, Genovese introduces an international comparative method, a hemispheric perspective, discussions of work ethics, social relations, and rebellion—to name only a few themes of the book. The author's work has revitalized scholarship and debate on race, culture, class, and labor arrangements. The book has engendered both negative and positive controversy since its publication,[20] and one hesitates to add to the plethora of comments. Through all of the pro and con discussions, the profundity and general excellence of Genovese's scholarship remains. Still, any historian writing on slave life and culture, especially religion, will necessarily take a position on Genovese's major and even some minor precepts. My disagreements with the author, implicitly discussed throughout this book, are briefly stated here in general terms. Both Genovese and I recognize value in slave culture, seeing the central role of religion and spirituality. And we observe a developing nationalism. On the major points of "paternalism," "hegemony," and "accommodation" as he uses the latter term, our views differ. Among the Gullahs, and especially in the Sea Islands, paternalism was not a determining factor in master-slave relationships. Nor did paternalism, as Genovese maintains, prevent slavery from evolving into that "closed" system discussed by Stanley Elkins.[21] To enforce my argument, and to provide a fuller presentation of Gullah society, I discuss master-slave relationships (especially as they affect the religious sector) throughout this volume. Rather than paternalism, I see *slave folk religion* as an important determining factor in precluding the development of a "closed" system. Gutman saw the slave family as another foil to white authority. Slave religion also represents black denial of white cultural authority in the slave quarters. One cannot debate the political power of master over slave, and hegemony is one kind of power. However, consider hegemony on a cultural level. Gullah religion was a congealing force in cultural creativity and a sense of community. The contours of black spiritual organization embodied certain African beliefs, an African world view and selective Christianity. In some respects, Genovese would probably not disagree with this[22] (in fact my reading of his work as a graduate student some years ago in-

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114 spired these considerations). Yet my examination of symbolic elements, behaviorisms, and rituals within Gullah culture lead to interpretations 114 and conclusions different from Genovese's. The socioreligious connec- 121 tion that encouraged and helped fashion black life did not, among the Gullahs, rest "on a politically dangerous kind of individualism."[23] What Genovese interprets as conservatism and individualism, I see as forged resistance culture and group consciousness.

121 Slave religion had its individualistic tendencies. Yet on the positive side these enhanced a sense of personal dignity and self-esteem. Of course some slaves were involved mainly for spiritual, otherworldly gratification. But more significantly, religion was a support for community-building processes, collective strength, and solidarity. Life represented more than "endurance," "accommodation," or "survival," but an effective means of resisting the hegemonic trappings Genovese writes about. Genovese also sees Christianity as binding "master and slave together in universal communion,"[24] though contributing to their separation. *Communion?* It is doubtful that slaves accepted this psychic bonding. My evidence points to the contrary—to a people defending their collective spiritual separation and independence.

121 Genovese is confusing when he acknowledges the African heritage in the slave work ethic, dancing, cooking, and even housing, but maintains 114 that "spiritual collectivism retreated before the advance of Christianity." In place of Africanity slaves "accepted Christianity's celebration of the individual soul," which became their "weapon of personal and community survival."[25] This "community" is a type of nationalism in its most conservative form—religious. It is a sort of knee-jerk reaction (this nationalism) that replaces true struggle or resistance and forces slaves into a Gordian knot with the planters pulling the strings. This nationalism confines slaves as willing social, psychological, and cultural dependents.[26] Without the input of resistance, this type of religious nationalism takes a conservative, nonprogressive emphasis. But among the Gullahs resistance to bondage on a number of levels remained a facet of black life. It is important to historical inquiry that the experiences of bondspeople be examined in terms they help define, as one does with other groups—slaveholders for instance. Otherwise one risks espousing a kind of retrospective cultural chauvinism. Why interpret the psyche of the slave through the ideology of the slave master? Or, how much can

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114 we learn about workers by studying them through management ideology?

Professor Genovese describes the slave South in prebourgeois or precapitalist terms, a theory other historians have adopted. One can see the convenience and appeal of this definition as a means of explaining social and economic relations. Paternalism is a prebourgeois ideology for the most part. Paternalistic, feudalistic, or signorial relationships characterize societies where political and religious structures are inextricably tied to their economies. There is less class cohesion, or class consciousness in prebourgeois societies because of the simplicity of production organization and the "self-sufficiency" of communities. Within such an historical period, the oppressed group supposedly never become *conscious* of the *true* economic driving forces behind historical movement. Nor are the oppressed *conscious* of their own victimization because class relations in these societies remain complex and concealed. This is a contrast to the stark simplicity of class interest and exploitation under capitalism.[27] Not all of the South, especially that which provides Genovese's model, fits the economic pattern. Plantations were largely dependent upon an international market for profit. They were not "self-sufficient" since other areas of the country and world supplied them with provisions and commodities of life-style. But the social pattern in prebourgeois society raises more interesting questions if applied to the bondspeople—the oppressed. Can we say that slaves were not *conscious* of their *oppression* (that they had only *false consciousness*)?[28] Slave testimony indicates otherwise, though not in the Marxist-Leninist sense. The wealth of masters and impoverishment of slaves is evidence of the "alienation" (lack of ownership of or equitable return for labor) of the "producers" (slaves) from their "commodity" (fruits of labor). Oppression and victimization were realized on the conscious level, but slaves' reaction to these forces needs to be measured less from a twentieth-century perspective.

121 As far as class relations being concealed, in the slaves' case under a web of paternalism and hegemony, the polarization between master and slave, especially when the latter was a field hand, was real. And of course Marx (who developed this analysis) was not referring to bondage, but to feudalism. In the latter case, relations may be less obvious because, among other things, peasants have a claim to the land they cultivate, race is not a factor, cultural differences are not as divisive, and in some societies,

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slaves from the Angolan ports.[3] Her theory implies an ethnic identification retained by BaKongo peoples.

Another theory also suggests that the name was group-initiated, yet from a different ethnic source. "Golla" was used in the eighteenth century while "Gullah" was a nineteenth-century term for slaves in the coastal region of South Carolina. A very large group of Africans from the Liberian hinterland were called Golas, sometimes spelled "Goulah." Chapter 1 discusses their importation into the Carolina Lowcountry and Georgia in large numbers during a period of rapid growth and settlement. One early twentieth-century white South Carolinian, Reed Smith, wrote extensively about Gullah dialect, maintaining that the term refers to the Golas of Liberia. His suggestion alone proves nothing. But further research demonstrates its plausibility, or at least the possibility of two complimentary original derivations. During the colonial era, Africans from the Windward Coast (Sierra Leone and Liberia) entered Charleston and heavily contributed to the coastal and Sea Island population. Golas and neighboring Gizzis (also called Kizzis or Giggis) were two of the largest African ethnic groups preyed upon by domineering Mende, Vai, Mandingas, and others. Methodist missionaries went to Liberia in the 1840s to convert the "Goulah nation." The spelling of Gullah and Goulah have obvious similarities. Additionally, missionaries were struck by "Goulah" Africans' use of English, as Northerners were by the Gullah speech. "The native Africans never use the personal pronoun of the third person feminine," wrote one missionary in 1843. ". . . it is always 'he, him.' " Similarly, Elizabeth Botume wrote of her initial incomprehension of the Gullah dialect during the Civil War, stating that her head grew "dizzy" trying to understand it, Worst of all for Botume was the confusion regarding family relations: "I never knew whether they were talking of boys or girls. They spoke of all as 'him.' "[4]

Even more interesting observations come from Lorenzo Turner's *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.[5] There are a number of problems with Turner's study. Yet even critics admit that in a "fair number of instances the derivation and meaning found for a Gullah name are reasonably convincing."[6] Turner includes in his list of African words *gala (gola, gula)* which he takes to mean "Gullah, a dialect spoken by Negroes in coastal South Carolina and Georgia, one who speaks Gullah." He does not list an African homologue for *gala*, but defines its African equivalent as "gola (. . . gula, gura) a Liberian tribe and its language . . . also see ngola, a

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tribe in the Hamba basin of Angola."[7] Hence Turner allows for both possibilities in the origin of the term. Linguist P. E. Hair observes that, given this Gola association, it is curious that Turner found almost no Gola language terms. Hair has another insight. It is generally conceded that Turner may have exaggerated the amount of African influence in Gullah, but also that he "conclusively" demonstrated it had "more" 'Africanisms' than any other dialect in the United States. But, says Hair, it has gone unnoticed that "a remarkably large proportion of the 'Africanisms' cited by Turner came from the Sierre Leone region." Of the 3,500 words listed by Turner and used in Gullah, only 500 are "working vocabulary" terms with known meaning. Of the latter number, 350 are terms used in conversation. The Sierra Leone proportion is about 20 percent. Also, the shortest list is terms from Gullah stories, songs, and prayers. There are 85 such terms and 63 percent are Mende and 21 are Vai. Says Hair, "thus the Sierra Leone region makes virtually a clean sweep of this list."[8]

Of the 3,000 personal names with "suggested" derivations, Hair states that even here the Sierra Leone influence is prominent. He suggests that Turner missed other ethnic identifications of Windward Coast origin (Bullom, Limba, Kissi, and Gola for instance), because "no dictionary or informant was available."[9] This indicates a greater Upper Guinea influence than scholars have previously recognized. Most have concentrated on the Kongo-Angolan influence, as indeed from first appearances, does Lorenzo Turner.[10]

African-American slaves who inhabited the Georgia coast were called Geechees, but had essentially the same culture as Gullahs. Linguistically speaking, Turner uses both terms interchangeably. He lists *gisi* as Mende and defines it as "a language and tribe of the Kissy country (Liberia)." Both Golas and Gizzis shared the same cultural institutions—Poro and Sande—as indeed did the Mende, Vai, Bullom, and others over a wide geographical area. Today *Geechee* is a folk term, generally used as a provocation. In this context it means "country." The term is generally used between intimates in a joking manner, or intended as a challenge to fight.[11]

One final point on linguistic considerations regarding Gullah origins. Several Gullah personal names identified by Turner and listed with West African equivalents relate to Windward Coast secret societies. For example, Gullah *beri*, and *berimo* are listed as Vai. The former Gullah name refers to ". . . a branch of the society known as pora . . . a 'ceremonial

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capture. To some whites, this language was a gifted, colorful, and picturesque form of expression, so original and peculiar to the Gullahs that it was beyond emulation. In 1863, David Thorpe, then a teacher on occupied St. Helena Island, wrote to his father-in-law, "Old John" Mooney, describing among other things, the force with which Gullahs used their limited vocabulary:

> If you ask a man how he came from any place, he will say, "I took my foot." If you ask him about any work he has on hand, when he is to do it, he says, "I will strike in on that tomorrow and fight on with him till I get him done, den drop back on the next thing them is."[17]

Gullah musical ability was noted even in antebellum years. None who visited and wrote about the Sea Islands before or during the Civil War failed to comment on the rhapsodic tunes which the Gullah boatmen sang as their oars maintained a graceful, timely rhythm when striking the waters. And perhaps no one, except Gullahs themselves, was more stirred by the melancholy beauty of their "prayer-songs" than the Methodist missionaries who, after 1830, went among them to proselytize. But even a Northern skeptic like Arthur Sumner was moved by the musical power the Gullahs displayed, as indicated by his sublime description of July 4, 1862, on St. Helena:

> We had a glorious celebration of the Fourth. All the negroes on this island were assembled, and marched in a melodious procession, bearing green branches, and singing "Roll, Jordan, Roll" down through the beautiful shady road by the old Episcopal Church. Around this picturesque building, in front of the platform they gathered in a great crowd under the moss-grown oaks, while our majestic gridiron waved above them. General Saxton and one or two others made brief remarks. The height of the festivities was music and dried herring.
>
> Oh, I wish you and all my friends could have heard these Africs sing! I never listened to more impressive music than this. The singing was intrinsicially good; the songs strange and beautiful and their swaying to and fro with the melody, seemed to have a sort of oceanic grandeur in it.[18]

The late nineteenth and early twentieth century brought a flurry of interest and writing related to the Gullahs which continued through the 1930s. Folklorists, linguists, anthropologists, musicologists, sociologists, and novelists began celebrating the Sea Island region as a quaint, mysterious, picturesque corner of America. Some of this literature remains useful. Most of the scholarship of the period badly needs placing in a more modern, sensitive perspective, because it is dated and full of the

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114 sociological bias reflected in the "white-to-black" method of interpreting African-American culture. Willie Lee Rose's *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, written in 1964, is a fine work which demonstrates the early Reconstruction era and the problems African-Americans faced as new citizens. Yet Rose's book discusses the land question and Northern "missionaries" more than Gullah culture, which we only glimpse. More recently, Charles Joyner has written a historical recreation of the Gullah rice community, All Saints on the Waccamaw River. Using interdisciplinary techniques, Joyner offers a detailed reconstruction of daily life in this Georgetown District plantation society. Our works are similar in that we attempt to express historical appreciation of Gullah culture, and we make use of similar sources. Beyond that, our books differ considerably, especially in terms of focus, themes, structure, and style.[19]

121 All who went among the Gullahs were struck by the significance of religion in nearly every aspect of their social and cultural existence. Yet 191 no writer has attempted to characterize or interpret, from a cultural perspective, the spiritual components of Gullah life. This study represents such an effort. It has been a thought-provoking, engrossing study of social cohesion. In addition to considerations of a historical nature, this book was embarked upon because of a deep, subjective interest in the Gullahs and their fascinating example of group identity, adaptability, and black resistance on a militant and cultural level. I hope the book offers a useful means of discerning, capturing, and understanding the phenomenon that characterized and gave vitality to their spiritual and communal life.

175 No event polarized public opinion on the issue of religious instruction of slaves in South Carolina more than the Denmark Vesey Conspiracy of 1822. This attempt by Charleston slaves to "make a desperate struggle to recover their rights" was planned in the large African Methodist Church in that city. The incident created two well-defined and opposing views regarding religious instruction. On the one hand, panic-stricken Carolinians insisted that religious instruction of the slaves cease altogether. Yet others calmly counseled that if religion played a role at all in the Conspiracy, it was either a misguided interpretation of Christianity, inspired by Northern clergymen infiltrating the South, or was the result of "superstitious," "primitive" notions taught by native Africans. Some within this latter group argued that not only was it the *duty* of planters and

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As discussed in the text, research indicates that the majority of slaves in Carolina by 1740 were chiefly from Kongo-Angola. This was also the largest group imported into South Carolina during the entire slave trade as illustrated in table A.3, which was taken from Philip D. Curtin's *Atlantic Slave Trade*. However, Curtin's percentages may be misleading for purposes of examining African cultural influence in coastal Carolina because he lumps the entire slave trade period together. Up to 1740, the end of the first period of the Carolina trade, Kongo-Angolans were the majority. But as evident from tables A.1 and A.2, during the period of high economic growth and large-scale slave importation in the Sea Island region, these Africans composed a relatively small percentage of total cargoes with known coastal origins. Africans from the Kongo-Angola region do not again figure heavily in South Carolina trade until the nineteenth century. Curtin has no separate breakdown for these years (1804–1807), when many Kongo-Angola peoples were imported (see tables A.4 and A.5) chiefly, but not exclusively, for the benefit of up-country plantations and new territories. At the time, South Carolina was the only state importing slaves and supplied other states as well. In the nineteenth century, despite the emergence of Sea Island cotton as an export of growing significance, many coastal and Sea Island planters were well supplied with slaves and expressed strong hostility to reopening of the international trade in 1803. Concerned about the depreciation of their own slave property, as well as the prospect of slave revolts, these planters were instrumental in the near-defeat of the bill to reopen the African slave

TABLE A.3
Percentage of Slaves of Identifiable Origin Imported from 1733 to 1807

Coastal Region of Origin	*Percentage*
Senegambia	19.5
Windward Coast (including Sierra Leone)	23.1
Gold Coast	13.3
Bight of Benin, Bight of Biafra	3.7
Angola	39.6
Mozambique, Madagascar	0.7
Total	100.0

Source: Philip D. Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison-University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 157, Table 45.

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TABLE A.4
Percentage of Cargoes of Identifiable Origin Imported from 1804 to 1807 (Final Period)

Coastal Region of Origin	*No. of Cargoes*	*Percentage*
Senegambia	11	7.5
Windward Coast	44.5	30.5
Gold Coast	23.5	16.0
Bright of Benin, Bight of Biafra	3	2.0
Angola	55	37.7
Others	9	6.3
Total	90.0	100.0

Source: Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents*, vol. 4, passim.

TABLE A.5
Numerical Estimate of Slaves Identifiable by Origin Imported from 1804 to 1807 (Final Period)

	Cargoes with Numerical Count		*Cargoes without Numerical Count*			
Coastal Region of Origin	*No. of Cargoes*	*No. of Slaves*	*No. of Cargoes*	*No. of Slaves*	*Total Cargoes*	*Total Slaves (Est.)*
Senegambia	4	290	6	73	10	435
Windward Coast	33	4,374	16	2,096	49	6,470
Gold Coast	16	2,416	7	1,057	23	3,624
Angola	50	14,440	5	1,694	55	16,134
Bight of Benin Biglt of Biafra	6	1,809	1	301	7	2,412
Others	2	473	—	—	2	473
Total	111	23,802	40	5,221	151	29,023

Source: Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents*, vol v. 4, passim.

trade in South Carolina. Thus, Philip Curtin's percentages, which cover the years 1733–1807, are too broad chronologically to adequately represent the pattern of the slave trade in regard to cultural geography.

In *The Myth of the Negro Past*, Melville J. Herskovits provided what appeared to be a good source of ethnic information. Using raw material supplied by Elizabeth Donnan, Herskovits developed a numerical tabulation of slave imports into South Carolina for the years 1733–1785 in

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TABLE A.6

Number of Slaves Identifiable by Origin Imported from 1733 to 1785 (Middle Period)

Coastal Region of Origin	*No. Imported*
Origin given as "Africa"	4,146
From the Gambia to Sierra Leone	12,441
Sierra Leone	3,906
Rice and Grain Coasts	3,851
"Guinea Coast" (Gold Coast to Calabar)	18,240*
Angola	11,485
Congo	10,924
Mozambique	243
East Africa	230
Total Imported from Africa	65,466
Total Imported from the West Indies	2,303
Total Number of Imports	67,796

*Herskovits notes that of this number only 1,168 slaves were brought in ships sailing from "Benin," "Bonny," "New Calabar," and "Old Calabar." Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, p. 305 n.

Source: Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (Boston-Beacon Press, 1958; repr. from 1941 ed.) p. 48.

order to determine ethnic origin and influence among Africans imported into that state (see table A.6). However, Herskovits' computation somewhat confuses the issue of provenance in regard to the Sea Island region because it is based only on the available number of slaves from various regions rather than on the number of cargoes as well, and the percentage of cargoes from a particular area. In many cases, neither Donnan nor the Charleston newspapers (which were her main source) reported the number of slaves in a given cargo. Donnan's information on total yearly imports was not based on individual computation but derived from annual figures printed in newspapers that did not distribute imports on the basis of coastal origin. Thus, Herskovits apparently tabulated only cargoes which listed the African *coastal origin* and indicated the *size* of the cargo as well. This makes his numerical tabulation unreliable.

Another problem with Herskovits' tabulation for this study is that his estimates partly cover the period in which the Sea Islands were only sparsely settled (the early period). Hence, we cannot obtain a clear indication of the ethnic origins of Sea Island Gullahs from Herskovits' information. It seems that a more reasonable estimated of sources of or-

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Notes

Introduction

1. C. J. Calhoun, "History, Anthropology and the Study of Communities: Some Problems in Macfarlane's Proposal," *Social History* 3, no. 3 (1978): 369, and his "Community: Toward a Variable Conceptualization for Comparative Research," *Social History* 5, no. 1 (1980): 109–16. For other views of community, see for instance Thomas Bender, *Community and Social Change in America* (New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University Press, 1978); and Robert Redfield, *The Little Community: Viewpoints for the Study of a Human Whole* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955).

2. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 89; C. J. Calhoun, *The Question of Class Struggle: Foundations of Popular Radicalism during the Industrial Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 159. While Calhoun's views on community are useful here, we strongly disagree on other issues, especially regarding his anti-E. P. Thompson view of how ideologies affect laboring classes. Calhoun, *Question of Class Struggle*, passim.

3. Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures*, 90–105, 124.

4. Robert T. Parsons, *Religion in an African Society* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964), 173–76, 179, 183–85; James L. Sibley and D. Westermann, *Liberia Old New* (London: James Clarke 1928), 187–88; John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophies* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1959), 2–16; Robert Farris Thompson and Joseph Cornet, *The Four Moments of the Sun: Kongo Art in Two Worlds* (Washington, D. C.: National Gallery of Art, 1981), 85–93.

5. W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* in *Three Negro Classics* (New York: Avon Books, 1965, first pub. 1903), 213–21, 337–49; Julius Lester, ed. *The Seventh Son: The Thoughts and Writings of W. E. B. DuBois*, 2 vols. (New York: Random House, 1971) I: 252–62, 277–82; Manning Marable "The Faith of W. E. B DuBois: Sociocultural and Political Dimensions of Black Religion," *The Southern Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (Fall, 1984): 15–33; Sterling Brown, et al., eds., *The Negro Caravan* (New York: Dryden Press, 1941); 6, 412–21; Sterling Stuckey, "Through the Prism of Folklore: The Black Ethos in Slavery," *The Massachusetts Review* 9, Pt. 2 (Summer, 1968) 417–37. Stuckey's newly completed work is an addition to the new scholarship. However it was unavailable when my book went to press. Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory and the Foundations of Black America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987). Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness; Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 3–135, 54.

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113 6. Levine, *Black Culture and Consciousness*, 36–37, 43, 49–51, 75–77.

7. Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), ix.

8. August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, *Black History and the Historical Profession, 1915–1980* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 191.

[114] 9. Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 92. For a discussion of how Raboteau's view "minimizes the contribution of African ritual traditions" see Robert Simpson, "The Shout and Shouting in Slave Religion in the United States," *The Southern Quarterly* 23, no. 3 (Spring, 1985): 40–46.

10. Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 152.

11. Ibid., Chapters 3 and 4.

12. Ibid., x.

13. Edward H. Carr, *What Is History?* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), 23–35.

14. Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, Chapters 5 and 6.

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113 15. Vincent Harding, *There Is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983). Years ago, Harding explored relationships between religion and resistance among slaves. See his "Religion and Resistance among Antebellum Negroes, 1800–1860," in August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, eds., *The Making of Black America* I (New York: Atheneum, 1969), 179–97.

16. Harding, *There Is a River*, Introduction.

17. Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750–1925* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976), passim.

18. Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), passim, but especially xvi–xvii, 3–149, 280–84, 597–98, 658–60.

19. Meier and Rudwick, *Black History*, Chapter 3 and 258–65.

20. See for example Paul D. Escott, *Slavery Remembered: A Record of Twentieth Century Slave Narratives* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979) 18–35; E. P. Thompson, "Eighteenth-Century English Society: Class Struggle without Class?" *Social History* 3, no. 2 (1978): 134–37; Eric Perkins, "Roll, Jordan, Roll: A 'Marx' for the Master Class," *Radical History Review* 3, no. 4 (1976): 41–59; Gutman, *Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*, 309–20; For the most recent interpretation in support of paternalism, see Peter Kolchin, *Unfree Labor: American Slavery and Russian Serfdom* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987) 103–57, 195–241.

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567 21. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 283. According to Elkins, the typical American slave was labeled "Sambo" in Southern lore. "Sambo" was "loyal but lazy, humble but chronically given to lying and stealing: his behavior full of infantile silliness and his talk inflated with childish exaggeration." The "Sambo" of the Old South was compared by Elkins to what he termed a similar personality type, the prisoners of Auschwitz-Birkenau. The author states that they were one and the same historically, both products of a "closed" and "authoritarian" system. This personality type developed in the United States and in Nazi Germany but not in Latin America, according to Elkins, because Latin American institutions protected slaves while American institutions did not protect slaves nor German institutions protect Jews. Stanley Elkins, *Slavery, a Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), 82, 63–79, 73, 136–37, 175–217.

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113 22. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 209–232.

23. Ibid., 281.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid., 212.

26. Ibid., 283–84.

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27. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness, Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1973), 46–59.

28. Ibid.; Arthur P. Mendel, ed., *Essential Works of Marxism* (New York: Bantam Books, 1961), 15–16.

29. John Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972 ed.), 200–201.

30. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 329–88, 441.

31. Ibid., xvii.

32. John M. Janzen and Wyatt MacGaffey, *An Anthology of Kongo Religion: Primary Texts from Lower Zaire* (Lawrence, Kans.: University of Kansas Publications in Anthropology, No. 5, 1974), 2–3.

Prologue

1. Mason Crum, *Gullah, Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1940), 3, 19–22, 78; Guion G. Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), 112, 130; Paul Quattlebaum, *The Land Called Chicora* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1958), 86–88.

2. The spelling of Kongo with a K instead of C is used by some Africanists. It refers to the traditional, unitary civilization and way of life of BaKongo peoples. The C spelling represents the political shift that occurred with white colonial penetration and partition in Central Africa. Traditional Kongo civilization includes modern Bas-Zaire, neighboring Cabinda, Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon, and Northern Angola. The ancient civilization was once under the united suzerainty of the kingdom of Kongo. The language is KiKongo, although dialects vary widely in this Bantu-speaking world of Africa. The numerous ethnic groups and some neighboring ones share cultural and religious traditions. They also share memories of the trials and tears left in the wake of centuries of transatlantic trade in slaves. John M. Janzen and Wyatt MacGaffey, *An Anthology of Kongo Religion: Primary Texts from Lower Zaire* (Lawrence, Kans.: University of Kansas Publications in Anthropology, No. 5, 1974), 1–3; Robert Farris Thompson and Joseph Cornet, *The Four Moments of the Sun: Kongo Art in Two Worlds* (Washington, D. C.: National Gallery of Art, 1981), 27; Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 103; Wyatt MacGaffey, *Custom and Government in the Lower Congo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 11; Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 30–36, 44–45, 134–35, 411.

3. *SCG*, March 27, 1742; Reed Smith, "Gullah," *A Reprint of Bulletin #190 of the University of South Carolina* (Columbia: State Printing Co., 1926), 3–4; Winifred Vass, *The Bantu Speaking Heritage of the United States* (Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies, 1979), 31.

4. Smith, "Gullah," 3–4; *SCA*, December 22 and 29, 1843; Elizabeth Hyde Botume, *First Days Amongst the Contrabands* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1968; repr. from 1893 ed.), 54, 57. Peter Wood also suggests that perhaps Gullah derived from a "multiple etymology." See *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1974), 172, n. 12.

5. Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969; repr. from 1949 ed.).

6. See reviews and discussions by Raven I. McDavid, Jr., *Language: Journal of the Linguistic Society of America* 26 (April–June, 1950): 323–32, and Morris Swadish, *Word: Journal*

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124 114 113 *of the Linguistic Circle of New York* 7 (April, 1951): 82–83; P. E. Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in the Gullah Dialect of American English," *Sierra Leone Language Review* no. 4 (1965): 79–84; Frederick G. Cassidy, "The Place of Gullah," *American Speech* 55 no. 1 (Spring, 1980): 3–16.

(101) 7. Turner, *Africanisms in Gullah*, 194. Gullahs often referred to themselves as "countrymen," as a way of identifying themselves as African-born. When asked what their language was, they would reply, "the way we talk." Mary A. Twining and Keith E. Baird, "Introduction to Sea Island Folklife," *Journal of Black Studies* 10, no. 4 (June, 1980): 398; Donald R. Kloe, "Buddy Quow: An Anonymous Poem in Gullah-Jamaican Dialect Written Circa 1800," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (June, 1974): 82–84.

8. Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in Gullah," 79–81.

9. Ibid., 83.

(567) 10. Turner, *Africanisms in Gullah*, passim; Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*; Wood, *Black Majority*. Wood does suggest, however, that the Windward Coast slaves had a special appeal and significance because South Carolinians recognized their familiarity with rice, the colony's main export. The Windward Coast was also called the Grain Coast and in specific areas the Rice Coast. As Wood observes, "Throughout the era of slave importation in South Carolina references can be found concerning African familiarity with rice." Wood, *Black Majority*, 59–60. Daniel Littlefield further explored Wood's idea and provides an exception to the general emphasis on Kongo-Angolan influences. See his *Rice and Slaves: Ethnicity and the Slave Trade in Colonial South Carolina* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981). Another important author, the late Walter Rodney, also early recorded the significance of Upper Guinea in the transatlantic trade, although Rodney was not specifically writing about South Carolina. See his *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545–1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970).

578 113 11. Turner, *Africanisms in Gullah*, 91, 194; Twining and Baird, "Introduction to Sea Island Folklife," 397–98.

12. Turner, *Africanisms in Gullah*, 63, 151, 189; see Chapters 2 and 9.

174 13. Ibid., 136, 138; Wood, *Black Majority*, 131, 302, 334–39; Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, Chapter 2, 107, 108; Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in Gullah," 83; Kloe, "Buddy Quow," 87; Cassidy, "Place of Gullah," 7–14. Linguist Ian Hancock believes that KiKongo speech "cannot be counted as a contributing factor to Gullah," despite the large numerical representation, because BaKongo peoples did not go through a creolization process. He argues, even more forcefully than Hair, for Upper Guinea Coast influences since some of these Africans already spoke a creole because of contact with whites on the Guinea Coast. While assessment of Upper Guinea linguistic impact appears sound, Turner, Cassidy and others continue to support significant Kongo and Gold Coast influences. Ian F. Hancock, "Gullah and Barbadian—Origins and Relationships," *American Speech* 55 no. 1 (Spring, 1980): 27–32.

(113) 14. Roger Bastide, *African Civilizations in the New World*, trans. Peter Green (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 106, 154, 161; Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958 repr. from 1941 ed.); Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, Chapter 2; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 151–57, 178–203.

125 567 113 15. Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964).

16. Arthur Sumner to Lt. Joseph Clark, January 23, 1863, Penn School Papers, vol. 4, SHC.

17. Diary of William F. Allen, 25, 44, 83–84, in William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–

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• 114 I have come to Johns Island with Candie Carawan, historian Albert Raboteau, and filmmaker Louise Cox. Candie's husband, Guy, is flying in from a folk song concert and is to join us this afternoon at Janie Hunter's house. In the 1960s Guy and Candie lived and worked among these black people on Johns Island for two years. They wrote a book about the people of Johns Island—*Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?* But they are more than just the chroniclers of this story. They are part of the story too. They came to Johns Island to learn about Gullah culture; but they also made a great contribution to the people of Johns Island, and through them, to the civil rights movement and to all of us.

121 The story of Johns Island is one of a community's efforts to develop its economic and social resources in accordance with its own needs while at the same time preserving its incredibly rich folk heritage. Balancing development and preservation is a difficult task under any circumstances. When one considers the formidable obstacles against which the people of Johns Island had to contend—the legacy of slavery and segregation, the burdens of poverty and lack of education, the pressures of economic survival—that they have maintained that precarious balance for more than a generation seems little short of miraculous. It is not a story of inevitable or easy success, and it is not over yet. But enough has happened to command our attention. And enough remains in doubt to command our sympathy.

179 SKIN AND HAIR. Skin and hair. They seemed to matter more than anything else when Guy first came to Johns Island in 1959. The statute books in South Carolina were filled with laws based on differences in skin and hair. It seems unbelievable in retrospect, but it was the official policy of my

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nearly six hundred registered black voters were added to the rolls in Charleston County through the efforts of the citizenship school.

Guy Carawan first arrived on Johns Island on Christmas eve of 1959, and Esau Jenkins took him to the all-night Christmas Watch Meeting in Moving Star Hall. There Guy encountered African cultural survivals and what he called "the oldest form of Negro folk life still alive today in the United States." He had come to Johns Island from Highlander Folk School to learn about sea island culture and to serve as a chauffeur for Septima Clark, who did not drive. A native Californian with family roots in South Carolina, he had a master's degree in sociology and some training in folklore when he came to live with Esau Jenkins on Johns Island. Septima Clark and Esau Jenkins took Guy to community meetings and church services, where he met and sang with various members of the black community. "With these two beloved leaders to vouch for me," he noted at the time, "I've had the inside track in getting to know people who under different circumstances might be suspicious and unfriendly." He was inspired by the islanders' Afro-Christianity and their "praise house" form of worship. He thrilled to the old sea island spirituals and the islanders' "shouting" style of singing them. He fell in love with the sea island folktales and folk beliefs. He immediately recognized the importance of the rich folk culture he encountered on Johns Island, which would bring him back to the island year after year.

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During his first winter on Johns Island, Guy developed a singing program as a new feature of the citizenship schools. The singing program had two purposes. One was to help keep alive the islanders' beautiful singing traditions. The other was to build group consciousness and boost morale by singing the old spirituals, protest songs, and other folk songs. The singing program proved to have profound inspirational value for everyone who participated.

One day Guy sang a version of "Keep Your Hand on the Plow." He had learned the song in the 1950s as part of the Peoples' Songs Movement. Alice Wine told him she knew "a different echo to that" and sang a sea island version. Guy passed on

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her version, "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize," to young civil rights workers at conferences in 1960. Thus it was that the Johns Island version of this spiritual became one of the great inspirational theme songs of the civil rights movement.

In 1961, prompted by the rapid growth of citizenship schools to other islands and the Charleston area, Septima Clark and Bernice Robinson developed the first program to train citizenship school teachers. This curriculum spread throughout the South as participants came from the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Thousands of teachers were trained. Such community leaders as Fannie Lou Hamer in Mississippi and Hosea Williams in Georgia went home to teach and to organize voter registration campaigns. They simply refused to put up with segregation anymore. By 1962, when the major civil rights groups turned their attention to voter registration, they were able to use the approach pioneered in the citizenship schools between 1957 and 1961 because by then it was clear that the approach worked. Thus the citizenship schools on Johns Island were the foundation for the voting rights movement and played a major role in the overthrow of Jim Crow.

SINCE 1959 Guy had spent part of each year working with the citizenship school on Johns Island. In 1961 Guy married Candie Anderson; and in 1963 they moved to Johns Island with their small son, Evan. During the next two years they shared in the life and fellowship of the black community around Moving Star Hall. Their purpose was to help preserve some of the older black folk culture on the island by bringing honor and recognition to it. As Guy wrote to Pete Seeger in 1965, "These days, you can go to any one of the major folk festivals at Berkeley, UCLA, Chicago, Philadelphia, or Newport and see some of the finest folk talent in the country. But the communities from which these people come have been neglected. Leadbelly and his music are forgotten in Shreveport, Louisiana. I'm hoping our work on Johns Island (South Carolina) will provide an example of what can be done in other areas. It would be a shame to let this music die at the roots." To that end Guy and Candie

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•114 533 545 arranged for the Moving Star Hall Singers to perform their spirituals, folktales, and children's game songs across the country, from the Newport Folk Festival to UCLA. The Carawans produced recordings of the Moving Star Hall Singers, and Guy told of them and sang their songs in his own performances. As a result of Guy and Candie's efforts, the Moving Star Hall Singers became widely recognized across the country as perhaps the preeminent tradition bearers of the oldest layer of African-American cultural expression in living American tradition.

114 533 During this period Guy and Candie organized a number of "Sing for Freedom" workshops around the South, cosponsored by Highlander, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. At a three-day gathering in Edwards, Mississippi, for example, young civil rights workers from all over the region came together. There they exchanged (545) ideas and shared experiences with the Moving Star Hall Singers, the Georgia Sea Island Singers, and traditional singers and instrumentalists from Mississippi. There they swapped songs and learned new verses. Many sea island songs were thus introduced to new areas in the South because of these freedom song gatherings.

114 527 545 Guy and Candie also worked closely with the Johns Island community to produce a series of sea island folk festivals. The folk festivals picked up much of their meaning from the context of all the things that were happening in the sea islands and the South—the citizenship schools, the voter registration drives, the mass demonstrations of the civil rights movement. The festivals did not celebrate a quaint past; they related the past to the present. The festival became the focal point for "pilgrimages" from leading civil rights workers in the South—Vincent Harding, Julius Lester, Bob Moses, Willie Peacock, and Bernice Johnson Reagon. The old songs and stories, the old talk and tales seemed strikingly new and fresh. The traditions of the past had a power to move a generation, a power to call the youth to the task of achieving democracy.

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177 178 MANY CHANGES have come to Johns Island since Guy and Candie first lived and worked there. Some of the changes—low-cost housing, a health care facility, and a home for the elderly—have been initiated by the islanders themselves. But rapid resort development on Kiawah and Seabrook islands have contributed in their own way to the transformation of Johns Island, bringing new pressures and new challenges to the islanders.

178 One part of Esau Jenkins's legacy is a dedication to progress, to building institutions that enable the people of Johns Island to control their own lives. But another part of his legacy is a dedication to preserving the cultural heritage from which the people of Johns Island draw their strength and their distinctiveness. Not all islanders share both parts of Esau Jenkins's legacy equally. There are some who believe that the cultural heritage created by the ancestors in the bitter days of slavery and segregation is best forgotten. They feel the past as a burden of shame rather than as a source of strength. But without a sense of where they came from, how can the younger generation understand their achievement or comprehend how far they have come?

Whether the next generation will recognize and value the power and beauty of the past is by no means certain. At least some members of the younger generation are drawing strength from the old traditions. They are at home in the present because they are oriented in time as well as in space. Without a sense of where they came from, how else can people know whether they are going forward or backward?

• 114 If Esau Jenkins were still alive, I believe he would like this new edition of *Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?* In it Guy and Candie Carawan have preserved the magnificent heritage of the past in such a way that it can serve as a source of strength for the present. Johns Islanders—and all of us—can use that strength as Esau Jenkins did: to look to the future, to see what contribution we can make, to summon our friends to work together to do what still needs to be done.

Charles Joyner
December 1988

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INTRODUCTION

177 178 [126] It has been more than twenty years since *Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?* was first published—twenty-three years since the material was recorded and the original photographs were taken. In some ways the world pictured in those photographs no longer exists. When you visit the island now, you are immediately aware of change. There are many more houses and signs of prosperity. Most of the older, weathered, wooden homes are gone, replaced by brick or newer wood ones. The two main roads are heavily traveled now, primarily by people on their way to the two resort communities adjacent to Johns Island—Kiawah and Seabrook. On the major crossroads there are small shopping centers and in the summer months produce stands to market vegetables to resort-goers.

464 212 •114 In the early 1960s the islanders were hard-pressed people—maids, cooks, farmhands, and laborers. The level of education for most was quite low and yet we found an insight and wisdom about life, and particularly a richness of folk expression, that was inspirational. Before Guy came to Johns Island, he had traveled and worked in many parts of the South. A musician with training in folklore, he had a keen appreciation for the depth and variety of southern folk culture. On Johns Island he found something special, a world with a beautiful and flourishing cultural heritage unlike any he had encountered before. He felt it should be shared with many more people and nurtured in a way that would enable it to survive. Yet Johns Island was in the midst of cultural and social transition. How could he, as a visitor, make a contribution to its survival? We would spend the two years we lived on Johns Island in 1963–65 struggling with that question and trying a variety of projects designed to focus attention on the cultural richness of the

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area. Visiting the islands year after year since then, we are still concerned with the survival of its culture.

We did not come as traditional academic researchers. We came to work with a literacy and citizenship program developed by the Highlander Folk School to empower people. We knew this program would bring needed change to the islands. In a sense we had to create a role for ourselves which would both encourage that change and nurture those cultural roots. Guy worked during the winters between 1959 and 1961 using his music as part of the literacy classes. He drove Mrs. Septima Clark, the supervisor of the program, throughout the islands. He was introduced to the community by Mrs. Clark and by Esau Jenkins, a long-time fighter for progress and change, and was therefore accepted as a friend.

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In 1963 we moved with our small son into the middle of the community around Moving Star Hall, the praise house and gathering place for many of the people Guy had met in the literacy program. During the next two years we gradually got to know our neighbors until finally they were sharing with us many of their real treasures: their warmth, generosity, candor, and humor, their wisdom, their songs and stories, the good times in their homes and fellowship in their social and religious gatherings. We recorded many hours of interview material, life experiences, religious expression—particularly several all-night watch meetings in Moving Star Hall, folktales and remedies, children's game songs. We produced two albums and published the first edition of this book. During this period we worked with Esau Jenkins and others to put on a series of sea island folk festivals for island residents and for visitors from the lowcountry area and elsewhere. We also arranged for a group of singers from Moving

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Star Hall to travel to other parts of the country to share their songs, in an effort to keep alive some of the older folk material. Each of these projects brought a complex mixture of success and problems and a renewed determination to keep trying.

For generations the Johns Island people were relatively isolated from mainstream America. The low, flat island, covered with tidal creeks and marshes, farmland, and forests of oaks draped with gray Spanish moss, was accessible only by boat until the early part of the century, when bridges and causeways connecting it with the mainland began to be built. Cut off from the mainland, these descendants of cotton plantation slaves retained many aspects of the old slave culture: a regional dialect, Gul'h, still marked by distinctly African and Caribbean traits; a large body of folktales, cures, and supernatural beliefs; and a folk version of Christianity with a "shouting" style of singing old spirituals and hymns and a local "praise house" form of worship.

Old and new institutions existed side by side. For many people, Moving Star Hall—a tiny, battered clapboard building—had been the central meeting place for nearly fifty years. It housed a "tend-the-sick" and burial society, a secret lodge, and a community of worship. Here the members could express themselves freely and fully; in the Sunday night worship service each person took a turn preaching, testifying, praying, and raising a song.

Down the road a mile or so is Wesley Methodist Church, where a number of these same people attended regular Sunday services. Here the old folk ways were gradually being replaced by more formal modern practices. Wesley is a fine church with handsome pews, Methodist hymnals, a robed choir, and an organ. On the first Sunday of the month everyone listened to the Reverend G. C. Brown, who came from the mainland in the 1930s with a college degree, and sang hymns and spirituals led by the choir. But on the three Sundays a month when he preached in other churches, the congregation forgot about the organ and the hymnals and sang older spirituals, hymns, and shouts,

(P XII-A)

41 Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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Johns Island

217 It houses several collections especially relevant to island residents, including the Esau Jenkins papers. In 1987 we placed more than sixty hours of recorded material, along with prints of Robert Yellin's masterful photographs at the center. We wanted people from the islands, as well as scholars, to have access to this material.

887 593 869 In 1963 Esau Jenkins told us:

> Now some of us, because we can read a little bit more, forget about the place we came from and some of the songs which help us go on. And when older folks sang those songs, it helped them realize they're trusting in God and reaching for a better day. We certainly wouldn't want the children to get away from it. We should cherish it, we should preserve it and keep it. . . .
>
> Now if we hide those sweet songs and try to get away from what we came from, what will we tell our children about the achievement we have made and the distance we have come?

814 In 1988 we noticed a plaque in the office of Bill Jenkins, Esau's oldest son and the administrator of the Sea Island Comprehensive Health Care Corporation:*

> A people who have not the pride to record their history will not long have the virtues to make history worth recording: and no people who are indifferent to their past need hope to make their future great.

000 There really is treasure here—honey in the rock. Our hope is that it will always be a part of the islands and a source of strength to island people as they struggle with the pressures and challenges of the present and the future.

● 114 *The authors' royalties from the Brown Thrasher edition of *Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?* are going to the Tree of Life Fund administered by the Comprehensive Health Care Corporation in support of cultural activities in the community.

(P. xvi-A)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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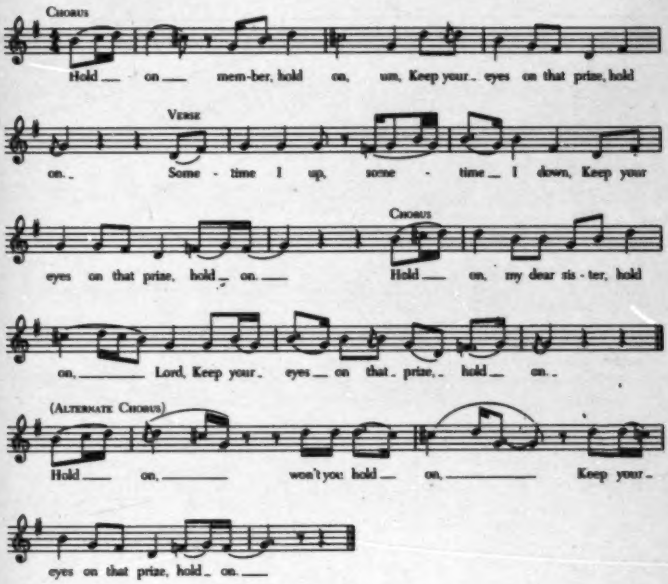
Johns Island

Mrs. Alice Wine

KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE PRIZE

533
539


Chorus
Hold on, mem-ber, hold on, um, Keep your eyes on that prize, hold on.
Verse
Some - time I up, some - time I down, Keep your eyes on that prize, hold on.
Chorus
Hold on, my dear sis - ter, hold on, Lord, Keep your eyes on that prize, hold on.
(Alternate Chorus)
Hold on, won't you hold on, Keep your eyes on that prize, hold on.

♩=54 (represents a composite tempo)

(Chorus)
Hold on, member, hold on,
Keep your eyes on that prize, hold on.

(Verse)
Sometime I up, sometime I down,
Keep your eyes on that prize, hold on.

(Chorus)
Hold on, my dear sister, hold on, Lord,
Keep your eyes on that prize, hold on.

This song has an interesting history. When Guy first spent time on Johns Island and sang a version of "Keep Your Hand on the Plow," which he had learned from Pete Seeger in the 1950s, Mrs. Wine said, "Oh, I know a different echo to that," and sang, "Keep your eyes on the prize." Guy later passed these words on to the young people then involved in the civil rights movement. Those words became the ones sung all across the South as part of the movement.

[114]
[668]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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AFTERWORD

668 In 1961 I was one of the students driven from Albany, Georgia, to Dorchester Center in McIntosh, Georgia, for the first Citizenship Education Training School operated by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Andrew Young had come to Albany to describe the program, which was based on the one Septima Clark, Bernice Robinson, and Esau Jenkins had initiated on Johns Island. Many of us who made up the first class had been suspended from Albany State College for participating in demonstrations and getting arrested. The demonstrations were in support of students who had been arrested after they attempted to buy tickets from the "white only" window of the Trailways bus depot. The demonstrations and increasing arrests quickly developed into a full-blown local movement. The idea of becoming trained to run schools to teach people to register and vote seemed a worthwhile activity to us and to the leaders of the local movement.

891 When we arrived at Dorchester, we met our
895 teachers—Dorothy Cotton, who came from Pe-
641 tersburg, Virginia, to work with SCLC; Septima Clark, who lost her job as a teacher in Charleston because of her membership in the NAACP and her work with Highlander; and Bernice Robinson, who was the first teacher of the citizenship school on Johns Island. In the classes at Dorchester we learned about the political structure of our communities as well as how to teach people to read and write. At that time I had never heard of precinct meetings and knew nothing about the local and state party systems, even though I had done well in my civics and government classes in school. But those classes had nothing to do with what I knew about Georgia. The classes that Septima Clark, Bernice Robinson, and Dorothy Cotton taught were eye-openers to a new way of looking at our community. For the next ten years, the citizenship
(668) school program trained grass roots leaders as they rose to action in the growing civil rights movement throughout the South.

668 At Dorchester, Cordell Reagon, a SNCC field
533 worker
•114 (P 235-A)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

secretary and native of the Nashville sit-ins, brought some of us together and told us that a white folk singer was coming to lead us in songs. I was also told that, though he might sound different, we were not to laugh when he sang because he was a true friend of the movement and had been tested and tried during the sit-ins in Nashville. Well, the singer was Guy Carawan, who immediately pulled out his guitar and began to play and sing. I remember hearing for the first time songs such as "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?," "Wasn't That a Time!," and hearing the name of Pete Seeger and the Weavers. I remember experiencing no feelings for the soft, flowing ballad style of "Flowers." But when Guy sang "Ol' Blue," he hit familiar territory. None of us had heard the song, but we could feel the story. We requested it over and over again.

Guy spent the rest of the week with us and accompanied us on our freedom songs. He later showed up again and again in mass meetings all over the South and asked me to help him organize several workshops that brought songleaders from the movement together with traditional singers such as Doc Reese from Texas and the Georgia Sea Island Singers from St. Simons Island with singers and song organizers from the topical and folk song revival from the North. Len Chandler, Alan Lomax, Theo Bikel, Phil Ochs, and Tom Paxton were new names we learned during this time.

Then in December 1964 Guy and his wife, Candie, invited us, the Freedom Singers from Atlanta, to a festival on Johns Island. There we met Esau Jenkins, who took us to the Progressive Club and a singing. The Georgia Sea Island Singers were there and I heard the Moving Star Hall Singers for the first time. I had never heard or seen this song style before. Led by Janie Hunter and Benjamin Bligen, the singing sounded ancient and the shouting and rhythms more complex than anything I had ever attempted myself.

I will never forget the waves of sounds sweeping into each response after a call by Benjie, or

(P. 235-B)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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533 Mrs. Hunter, or Ruth Bligen. Benjie would call, "Oh, see God's ark," and everybody would respond, "See God ark . . . Tell me how long . . . See God ark a moving." Every note had a wave to it, a curve of sound loaded with vocal power and emotion. Ruth Bligen always carried the high line and the sound of her singing reached you first, pulling the other, lower lines with her. When the chorus ended, the rhythm changed. What had been double rhythm format moved into three cross times. People rose to their feet, and their feet moved in one time, their hands crossed their foot pattern, and the melody operated at a more intense level on top of, or driven by, this multi-rhythmic activity.

•114 Since that first visit I have returned to the island many times to work with Mrs. Hunter and also with Septima Clark and William Saunders, always guided by the work that began with Esau Jenkins' efforts to transform the lives of people of his home community and the cultural research of Guy and Candie Carawan, which went far beyond field collecting. In 1972 I returned to the island for the funeral of Esau Jenkins. I returned also to interview Mrs. Hunter, Septima Clark, and later the tobacco workers who had used "We Shall Overcome" in their union meetings and on the picket lines. On the island it was sung in their traditional song style, complete with the shout and as "I Will Overcome." While working on the Bicentennial Festival of American Folklife at the Smithsonian, I worked with Rev. Willis Goodwin to bring a congregation and a prayer band from Johns and Yonges islands to the festival during the summer of 1975.

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(529)

185 THE WORK of Esau Jenkins lives. The work of Septima Clark lives. You can see it in the health centers. You can see it in Bill Saunders' political work and the rise in the number of registered voters. You can see it in the development of Bernice Robinson as a leader, teacher, and candidate for office. Maybe Ethel Grimball is exactly what the school board needs; maybe she is the work of Septima Clark in the eighties and nineties. Today Gerald Mackey's description of teaching in the school system is reminiscent of Septima Clark's struggles with that same system years ago.

[P.236-A]

but such a range of language use would be highly desirable for inclusion in any comprehensive analysis of language change.[2] Observations of such conversations were made, and some anecdotal information will be included as a supplement to the recorded data. The one recording made without the researcher as a participant is an example of highly formal register; the circumstances of this recording were that an elementary school child took home a recorder at my request and asked her grandmother to record memories of her youth on the island. In effect, the recorder itself acted as a participant, and was the recipient of a carefully rehearsed speech.

In addition to recordings of conversations with island residents, conversations with selected mainland residents were also recorded. From observations made of language used by school children and by some mainland residents encountered at various community activities, it had become apparent that the lower socio-economic group on the mainland retained more creole features in their speech than did island residents. For comparative purposes, therefore, four conversations made with speakers from this sub-group of this black

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[2]Denison (1969, 1971) provides a description of the range of language used by a particular community, in his study of a plurilingual community in the Carnian Alps. His analysis was based on observations made during extended vacations in the community, not recorded electronically, and serves as a model for the allocation of language resources which a given community might show.

193

(2) well I do need the kitchen fE me-self, 'cause them ain't gon do nothing fE me (S2)

'well I do need the kitchen for myself, because they aren't going to do anything for me'

Intensifier: (3) and I had to get work then fE true (S8)

'and I really had to get work then'

COMPLEMENTIZER
Purposive: (4) my brother he jump on the big boat fE let the people know what happen (S1)

'my brother jumped onto the big boat to let the people know what happened'

Adjunctive/
Relative: (5) I think I was too old fE be 'long with them (S1)

'I think I was too old to be along with them'

Object: (6) and so my cousin she tell me fE come on play with her (S17)

'and so my cousin told me to come on and play with her'

CONDITIONAL[1]
Future: (7) tomorrow I fE clean the house

'tomorrow I will clean the house' (interpretation by S18)

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[1]I am indebted to William A. Stewart for calling these uses of fE to my attention and for providing the sample sentence (7) for use in checking the two meanings of fE as a conditional marker. Some speakers interpreted this utterance as meaning a simple future as did S18, while others interpreted it as carrying a sense of obligation: 'tomorrow I have to clean the house.' Generally, speakers who had the greatest number of creole features in their speech gave the simple future interpretation. Conditional here is used in the sense of 'non-factual' or 'unreal.'

[114]

193 Obligative: (8) I do some everything what ee fE do in the world while I was coming up (S2)

'I did some of everything that should be done in the world while I was growing up'

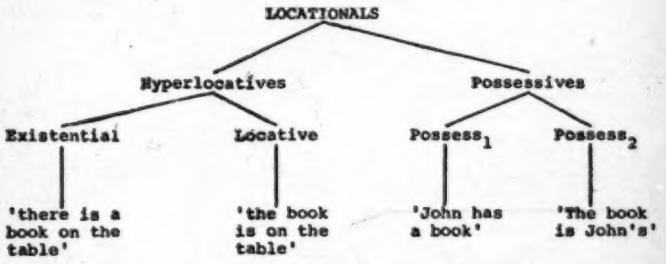
Fillmore (1968) and others have discussed the use of prepositions for case marking in English. As a preposition in Gullah, fE marks the benefactive case. In intention, it is associated with notions of possession. As a complementizer, the most frequent use of fE is for the introduction of clauses associated with notions of purpose and result as in (4). It is also used with adjunctive and relative clauses and with object clauses after certain verbs. The conditional use of fE has almost disappeared for present speakers of Gullah. The future use of (7) was obtained by direct elicitation, and all speakers did not agree with the gloss provided for the utterance. The use of fE as a conditional marker of obligation was retained by a few very old and by some children in spontaneous speech, but its occurrence in recorded texts was rare. In the same stretch of discourse in which (8) was recorded, speaker S2 indicated command of the standard English equivalent for the conditional with the following utterance:

(9) I done do everything in the world wey people should do (S2)

'I have done everything in the world that people should do'

[114] Washabaugh (1975) has recently argued that complementizers in creoles, and perhaps in other cases of language

193 elaboration, develop from locatives. To agree with his
•114 analysis would mean identifying the preposition fɛ in Gullah
as a locative. I have argued elsewhere (Nichols, 1975) that
193 his claim is too strong. Benefactive prepositions in Gullah
and other creoles use morphemes identical to those for comple-
mentizers and cannot be considered true locatives. There
does seem to be a close relationship between complementizers
and markers for the benefactive and dative cases in many
languages; some languages use homonymous morphemes to mark
the conditional or subjunctive, as well as for complementizer
and case. Gullah is one of these, having three uses for the
morpheme fɛ. I have suggested that the abstract notion
'locational,' along lines discussed by E. Clark (1970), might
be useful for examining relationships between these grammati-
cal categories which often utilize the same morpheme. Clark
schematizes locational constructions as follows:



6: Smith I,Y-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

128 My chairman Dr. Ernest D. Washington really made this research possible. His guidance and patience ultimately underlie the completion of this dissertation. I valued the expertise and input of the other committee members, Drs. Johnnetta B. Cole and Gloria I. Joseph.

To the Sea Island families I offer my sincere indebtness. While I can not cite all the families who should be named, I must mention these families: Burns, Smith, Brown, Hagwood, Gadsen, Blake, Seabrooke, Choice, and Washington.

It is the Godly wisdom and strength of my grandparents Martin and Carrie Burns that I relied on so heavily in conceptualizing the spirit of this effort. My mother Marie B. Smith, sister Theodosia, and brothers Theodore and William provided the reflective references I needed in completing this task.

• 114 I am indebted to my wife Dobra, and children Samantha and Nestor whom lived through the ordeals of this dissertation with me. Without the support of Ruth, Craig and Corey Washington this effort would have been immensely more difficult.

434 592 464 an unemployment rate of 3.1%, which compares to a 3.7% ratio for male workers. Females were the heads of 836 of the families with poverty level incomes.

434 On a county basis, the median annual income of Black workers was $4,635. Black female head of households earned a median income of $3,162. Six thousand nine hundred and forty-one or some 44.6% of the 15,576 Black families in the county had incomes below the poverty line. The median income of families below the poverty line was $2,193. Fifteen per cent of the total number of families were receiving public assistance.

The 1960 census reported 10% of the Sea Island families with incomes under $1,000; 65% of this work force earned less than $2,000. This United Methodist Church survey reports a 15% unemployment rate across the islands. Employment in "the area is of a seasonal nature and most people are out of active employment for a large part of the year."[2]

464 794 The discrepancies between these figures are apparent. 464 794 First hand exposure to the islands would suggest the accuracy of the latter figures. However, the methodological 114 limitations of the church survey effort makes the reported estimates suspect. For example, the researchers were on the islands only one week, during which time they concentrated

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[2]Colin Moore and Robert Washington, A Profile of Rural Poverty, A Report on Economic Conditions in the Sea Islands of South Carolina, August, 1970.

464 their time and energy in interviewing the leadership per-
794 sonnel of each island, and consequently relied quite heavily
•114 on the estimations they provided. The error possibilities which accompany this procedure as the basis for later projection statements are well noted.

362 HOUSING ON THE SEA ISLANDS

There are 11,557 housing units on the five Sea Islands. The median number of persons per unit is 4.01; 3,743 of these units are occupied by Black families. The median number of persons per Black occupied unit is 4.65.

The by island breakdown shows a total of 6,642 units on James Island. One thousand one hundred and twenty-eight of the total are units occupied by Black families. There are 4.63 Blacks and 3.64 Whites per units.

Johns Island has a total of 1,875 units, with 4.01 persons per unit. Blacks occupy 678 of these units and there are 4.58 Blacks per unit.

Wadmalaw Island has 477 units and 4.24 persons per unit. Three hundred and seventy-two of these units are Black occupied, with 4.62 persons per unit.

Yonges Island has 2,224 units and 4.15 persons per unit. Blacks occupy 1,326 of these units; there are 4.78 Blacks per unit.

There are 329 units on Edisto Island, and 4.18 perrons per unit. The persons per unit average for Black household

6: Smith I,Y-5 (no date) 1989
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121 are more distinctly West African patterns encountered as
174 are found among Sea Island communities. It has also been
178 suggested in the dialect research and folklore collections, that as distance from the mainland increases, more distinctly West African cultural traits are encountered. Similarly, older Sea Islanders tend to mirror West African cultural patterns to larger extents and in purer forms than younger islanders. These reports support the notion that the factors of isolation and of recent arrival have operated to enhance the protection and subsequent retention of Africanism among Gullah Blacks to an extent unique in the United States.

THE PROBLEM

121 The significance of Sea Islanders as a people who be-
• 114 cause of their unique situation have retained overt mani-
178 festations of their West African heritage is clearly noted in the literature. While he argues against the retention position in general, Frazier could not deny the exception of Sea Islanders. He writes:

> During the process of adjusting themselves to American civilization, the majority of the Negroes have sloughed off completely the African heritage.[13]

In view of Turner's work (1939) among Sea Islanders, Frazier modifies his position, "African patterns of thought and

[13] Frazier, op. cit., pp. 3-21.

6: Smith I,Y-5 (no date) 1989
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121 behavior could survive only where the Negroes were isolated
114 and where there was sufficient common understanding among
178 them to give significance to African survivals."[14]

In contrast to Frazier's assertion of the complete destruction of the African family organization among American blacks. Dubois[15] believed that careful research would reveal traces. While many aspects of the Sea Island experience have been studied, systematic investigations of the African family organization as proposed by Dubois has not been attempted among Sea Islanders. In this regard, Turner warns that Sea Islanders often exhibit African behavioral features only among the intimate circles of the family. However, if the essential role of the family in cultural transmission is understood, then systematic information on Sea Island child rearing may provide clues on the extent of the survival of African elements among Island families. Furthermore, such an investigation may provide a retrospective glimpse at the processes of de-Africanization of the American black family.

121 Parson's collection of Sea Island folklore identifies
178 attitudinal patterns and beliefs which are clearly of West

[14] Ibid.

[15] W. E. B. Dubois, The Negro Family (Atlanta: University Press, 1908), p. 21.

124 Consequently, this procedure was relaxed to some degree during the actual interviews.

123 Had not the researcher been a native of the Sea Islands this research effort would have been immensely more difficult. In part this difficulty could be attributable to the workings of other researchers in this area. In particular, many of the islanders voiced deep concern over the book written by Carowan Ain't we Got a Right to the Tree of Life. These islanders felt this work was by no means an accurate representation of their life style or beliefs. But because of the native heritage of the researcher many families agreed to participate in hopes of the writer being more able to accurately present the ethos of the Sea Island people.

128 DATA ANALYSIS

Statistical inference was the method of data analysis. The chi-square and the Fisher Exact Test were used to compute significance at either the .05, .01 or .001 level. The following analysis of relationship between the variables island, generation, and sex were conducted:

I Island (1,2,3,4,5) by questions one thru thirteen.

II Generation (1,2,3) by questions one thru thirteen.

III Sex (1,2) by questions one thru thirteen.

IV Island by generation by questions one thru thirteen.

6: Smith I,Y-5 (no date) 1989
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CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

771 (114) Crum[22] claimed that the Gullah people have no interest in the future. This researcher found the case to be the opposite. The Gullahs, the elders in particular, are constantly looking ahead to the day on which their life patterns will be judged fitting to "keep eternal company in the Great Kingdom." Their life paths and worldly efforts are aimed at nothing else than at the day when their deeds will be reviewed. It is with the religious context, that the discipline behaviors of the Gullah people must be understood. Malicious acts of child abuse, and the heavy handed parent are frowned upon. Discipline acts for the Gullah, are aimed primarily at keeping the child "en d steppn of d Lord," meaning that the purpose of much of the discipline behavior is to prepare the child for demands of living the religious existence. Dr. Spock's notions of child rearing have no relevance in the Gullah household. Here the teachings contained in the Bible are the guide posts the parent follows. Discipline manifested as physical punishment appear to be no more frequent than the verbal

771 861 182

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[22] Crum, op. cit.

121 English verb must agree in number with its subject.
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193 3. There is no matching of gender and sex in third person pronouns in the Creole; English makes such distinctions.

1.1. Studies of Gullah

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•114 Early twentieth-century studies on Gullah were linguistically prejudiced. The language was treated as a corrupted and intrinsically inferior dialect of English. Without regard to the linguistic mechanics of West African languages, A. E. Gonzales attributed the linguistic peculiarities of Gullah to such physical features as full lips and thick tongues. John Bennett, Reed Smith, Guy Johnson and others shared views similar to those of George Krapp of Columbia University who asserted that Gullah was either a close relative of certain British dialects of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries acquired by the African servants from English-speaking supervisors, or that it was only an outgrowth of 'baby talk' that the Europeans used while addressing their servants. In either case, Krapp contended that Gullah was nothing more than an 'intrinsically inferior and simplified form of English with cases, number, gender, and tenses reduced to the vanishing point.' He asserted that 'very little of the dialect or perhaps none of it was derived from sources other than English' (Krapp 1924:192-3).

12 phrase or initiates a negative imperative sentence.

English	*Freetown Krio*	*Bwondo Populaire*
I do	a du	me bo
I don't do	a nɔ du	me ke bo
do	du	boo
don't do	nɔ du	ke boo
I did	a bin du	me nga bo
I didn't do	a nɔ bin du	me ke nga bo

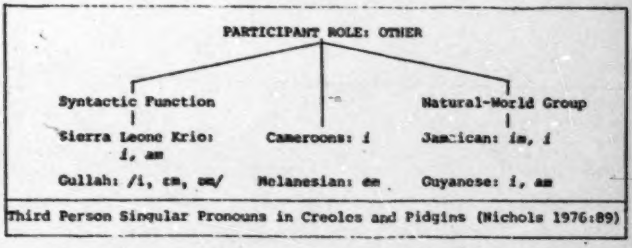
Comparison of verb phrases (Todd 1974:41)

121 The polygenetic theory attempts to explain similarities among creoles through a spontaneous generation process where creoles are thought to have developed independently with influences from their parent languages. Some 121 polygenesis proponents such as Robert A. Hall, Jr. (1966) suggested 114 that pidgins and creoles resulted from 'baby talk' used by overseers to communicate with their servants. Consequently, the language which developed was simplified in grammatical and phonological structure. This theory is unsatisfactory for several reasons. (1) Early accounts indicate that the European overseers and their families were learning the creole from the servants and not vice versa (Dillard 1972:192); (2) if the European had improvised his own unique variety of baby talk to communicate with his servants, one would not be able to account for the fact that all French creoles are mutually intelligible and (3) the structural similarities shared by the Atlantic creoles of Spanish, French and English are too numerous for pure coincidence (DeCamp 1971:19).

193 sample indicates that /ɔm/ is perhaps NOT related to /hɪm/ ip the superstrate. First, there is a definite phonetic pattern observed in the use of /ɔm/, /ɪm/, and /hɪm/. The mid central vowel /ɔ/ + /m/ is the general marker used for object position only. When reference is made to a pronoun approximating English *him* the high front vowel /ɪ/ is used, and it occurs only in subject position. [194] Furthermore, /ɪm/ occurs as the unaspirated allomorph of *him* in MASCULINE objective position only. Even then its frequency of occurrence is only 21% as compared to 71.5% occurrence of /ɔm/. Up to this point, the pattern that seems to be emerging is that the Gullah speaker acquires a form, generalizes and saturates each case with this form before going on to another selection, so that each form selected appears in each of the three cases. If /ɔm/ is etymologically connected with /ɪm/, one would perceive its existence in the feminine and neuter categories also. [197] It does not make an appearance, which suggests that by the time Gullah speakers acquire the English objective pronouns in the evolutionary process, they have already made the distinction between masculine, feminine and neuter case markers."

[194] The phonetic difference between /ɪm/ and /ɔm/ is slight, and thus would make /ɔm/ easily replaceable by /ɪm/, and ultimately replaced by the pre-aspirated allomorph /hɪm/. The evidence indicates that /ɔm/ is [114] still the only pronominal form marked for case, which is

193 (114) supportative of Nichols' claim that the basic distinction between the forms of personal pronouns used in the creoles is related to participant roles within a given discourse whereby the third person category is used to designate persons or things other than the speaker or hearer. The basic distinction between the forms of personal pronouns in Gullah (/i, em/) and Krio (*i, am*) is in the syntactic function of object and non-object. The basic distinction between forms used in Jamaican (*im, i*) and Guyanese (*i, am*) seems to be between animate and inanimate natural-world classes. Cameroon (*i*) and Melanesian (*em*) simply use a one form classification 'other' to designate persons or things other than the speaker or hearer. She offers the following schema to show these groupings:



Third Person Singular Pronouns in Creoles and Pidgins (Nichols 1976:89)

Though it is not a universal that languages with a full range of functions must classify personal pronouns by both syntactic function and natural-world group, English

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
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000 Since their day, many writers have depicted various phases of Negro life and character, ranging from the broad comedy of Octavus Roy Cohen to the sombre psychological sketches of Mrs. Julia Peterkin, the penetrating analysis of DuBose Heyward, and the problem note of T. S. Stribling and Clement Wood.

•114 197 To come to the Gullah dialect in particular, owing to the peculiar difficulties of representing its sounds in written speech,[1] its appearances in literature have been gradual and infrequent, and up to the last few years have met with comparatively small popular acclaim. What seem to be its only three ante-bellum echoes are Mrs. Caroline Gilman's *Recollections of a Southern Matron*, Charleston, 1837;[2] Jupiter, in Poe's "Gold Bug," 1843;[3] and William Gilmore Simms' three stories "The Snake of the Cabin," "The Lazy Crow," and "Caloya, or the Loves of the Driver," appearing in 1845 and 1846.[4]

114 533 Within a few years after the close of the war there appeared several important contributions by Northerners whom the war had brought into first-hand contact with Negro plantation music.[5] The earliest was a carefully edited collection, *Slave Songs of the United States*, New York, 1867. These songs were gathered mainly at Port Royal, S. C., between 1861 and 1865, by officers of the Federal army and mission teachers, and were accompanied with prefatory comment on dialect and music by W. F. Allen, C. P. Ware, and Lucy McKim Garrison. In the

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[1] This difficulty exists not only for the writers but for the readers as well. It will probably always keep Gullah from becoming as popular as the easier, upland dialects of Harris and Page.

[2] In her Preface Mrs. Gilman says: "Some apology may be necessary, as a matter of taste, for the frequent introduction of the Negro dialect, but the careful reader will perceive that it has only been done when essential to the development of individual character."

[3] The peculiar genius that could create "Ulalume" and "The Fall of the House of Usher" was not fitted to depict a Negro successfully. Jupiter's characterization, however, is better done than his dialect, which is not so bad for Gullah as it would be if it were an attempt at the upland dialect.

[4] Published in the collection entitled *The Wigwam and the Cabin*, in two parts, New York. As to the authenticity of these stories, Simms says in the Prefatory Advertisement: "I have mostly drawn from living portraits, and in frequent instances from actual scenes and circumstances within the memories of men."

[5] See also Gaines, *The Southern Plantation*, p. 138.

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same year appeared Thomas Wentworth Higginson's essay on Negro Spirituals in the *Atlantic Monthly*, later included in his *Army Life in a Black Regiment*."

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One of the first serious attempts to reduce the Gullah dialect to writing was made by Mrs. A. M. H. Christensen, of Beaufort, who, though a Northerner by birth, both caught the Negro's point of view and mastered the difficult dialect. Two or three years before the advent of Uncle Remus, she published a South Carolina Sea Island version of "De Wolf, de Rabbit an' de Tar Baby," in the *Springfield Republican*, and followed it with several other similar tales in the *New York Independent*. Her book of fables, however, *Afro-American Folk Lore*, was not published till 1892."

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Meanwhile Joel Chandler Harris, encouraged by the cordial reception of his first series of Uncle Remus stories,[11] included in his second volume, *Nights With Uncle Remus*, 1881, a few Gullah stories put into the mouth of "Daddy Jack." These were not particularly successful, for Harris did not have the same intimate knowledge of the low-country darkey as he had of his up-country prototype, and

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[11]Boston, 1870, Chapter IX.

[12]Its full title is *Afro-American Folk Lore, Told Round Cabin Fires on the Sea Islands of South Carolina*, J. G. Cuppies Co., Boston, 1892. It consists of an introductory poem by John G. Whittier, "Song of Negro Boatmen at Port Royal," a six page preface dated November 1891, and eighteen animal fables, totaling 116 pages. A second edition was issued by the author in Boston in 1898, from 200 copies of which Whittier's poem was omitted.

In a personal letter of April 19, 1926, Mrs. Christensen wrote concerning her book: "The first edition was partly arranged for in 1882, with a Boston publisher, but before the illustrations, etc., were decided on, the advent of my fourth son delayed proceedings. Just then appeared the first volume by Joel Chandler Harris. Uncle Remus had forestalled me. For several years I had been occasionally publishing my stories in the New York Independent, so some friends amused themselves by calling me 'the original Uncle Remus'.

"Not till 1892 did I again arrange for publishing, this time with the J. G. Cupples Company, Boston. Only two hundred copies were published before the firm failed. Then, years later, Lee and Shepard published the same stories in small, less expensive style, bound in red cloth."

[13]In the Introduction to *Uncle Remus, His Songs and His Sayings*, 1880, Harris quotes (XIII, XIV) a coast version of B'er Deer an' B'er Cooter, taken from Charles F. Harrt's *Amazonian Tortoise Myths*, William Scully, Rio de Janeiro, 1875, p. 12, which took it from *The Riverside Magazine*, November, 1868. The story is included to show the difference between the dialect of the cotton plantations (which Uncle Remus speaks) and that of the rice plantations and Sea Islands. The same story is contained in *The Nation* (New York), Feb. 23, 1871, p. 127.

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neither Daddy Jack's personality nor dialect ever approximated the appeal and charm of Uncle Remus. Of this dialect Harris remarks in his Introduction: "It is the negro dialect in its most primitive state—the 'Gullah' talk of some of the negroes on the Sea Islands, being merely a confused and untranslatable mixture of English and African words."

The most notable early success in Gullah was won by Charles Colcock Jones, Jr., of Georgia, in *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast*, 1888. Colonel Jones, a careful lawyer, handled the dialect correctly, and recorded with great exactness and without embellishment the stories as they were told him on the plantation." His collection, like that of Mrs. Christensen, contains the earlier analogs of many of the Uncle Remus stories.

How directly and immediately these Georgia and South Carolina coast tales are derived from African originals may be gathered from Mrs. Christensen's description of her collection as "comprised of verbatim reports from numerous sable story-tellers of the Sea-Islands, some of whose ancestors, two generations back, brought parts of the legends from African forests."[1]

During the decades following the work of Harris, Page, Jones, and Mrs. Christensen, the short-story of local color and the regional genre sketch became widely prevalent,

[1] Mr. Gonzales authoritatively says of his work: "One familiar with Negro speech recognizes that these tales are recorded as they fell from Negro lips, and as such they must be regarded, as far as they go, as the most authentic record of Negro myths on the continent probably the originals of many of the 'Uncle Remus' stories, for the slaves first came from Africa to the coast, bringing with them their myths and legends which gradually infiltrated into the hinterland." *The Black Border*, Foreword, p. 16.

[2] See her Preface, XII, XIII. Her informant gives the following account of the source of his stories, (which will likewise serve as a sample of Mrs. Christensen's Gullah dialect): "But I was gwine to tell you 'bout my ol' gran'daddy. I often yeardy him tell how 'e was bring ober from Arfrica in a ship when 'e was a boy. De white man lef' de ship behin' and gone asho' in a small boat; an' when dey meet up wid my gran'daddy an' a whole parcel more, young boys like, all from de same village, dey hire dem wid piece ob red flannel an' ting for go long wid dem. But when dey git dem on bo'd de ship dey bring dem ober to dis country an' sell dem for slave. Dey bring my gran'daddy to Charleston an' ol' Marse Heywood buy um. When I was a small bettle boy 'e ben berry ol', too ol' for work, an' I use for hab it for my tank for min' um. So 'e tell me heap o' dese story, ef I only could 'member um, dat 'e use to yeardy way ober in Arfrica." Pages 4, 5.

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•114 538 Negro life and character coming in for its full share of attention. Along with the stream of stories in the traditional vein and in the conventional Negro dialect of fiction," a trickle of Gullah stories and sketches has likewise been produced." Within the last few years in South Caro-

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"Alice Gaines, *The Southern Plantation*, pp. 62-94.

113 "Its literary appearances, listed chronologically by stages, are these:

I.

Mrs. Caroline Gilman, *Recollections of a Southern Matron*, Charleston, 1837.

Edgar Allen Poe, "The Gold Bug," 1843.

William Gilmore Simms, "The Snake of the Cabin," "The Lazy Crow," and "Caloya: or the Loves of the Driver," in *The Wigwam and the Cabin*, New York, 1845, 1846.

Slave Songs of the United States. A. Simpson and Co., New York, 1867; collected mainly at Port Royal, S. C., between 1861 and 1865, by officers of the Federal army and mission teachers, with prefatory comment on dialect and music by W. F. Allen, C. P. Ware, and Lucy McKim Garrison.

II.

Joel Chandler Harris, "Daddy Jack" stories in *Nights With Uncle Remus*, 1881.

Charles Colcock Jones, Jr., *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast Told in the Vernacular*, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1888; reprinted by The State Co., 1925. 192 pp., 61 fables, 8 page glossary.

Rev. John G. Williams, *De Old Plantation*, pamphlet reprint by Walker, Evans and Cogswell Co. of the "Brudder Coteny's Sermons" originally appearing in the Charleston News and Courier and Sunday News. 68 pp., 15 sermons, and 2 sketches, written down during 1896 in Allendale.

Mrs. A. M. H. Christensen, *Afro-American Folk Lore, Told Round Cabin Fires on the Sea Islands of South Carolina*, Boston, 1892. IX-XIV, 116 pp., 18 fables.

J. Jenkins Hucks, *Plantation Negro Sayings on the Coast of South Carolina in Their Own Vernacular*, pamphlet printed by Charles W. Rouse, Georgetown, S. C., 1899 or 1900. Afterwards withdrawn from circulation by the author; to be reissued in enlarged form by the author's son, Dr. Herbert M. Hucks.

F. M. Cronise and H. W. Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit, Mr. Spider, and the Other Beef: West African Folk-Tales*, Swan Sonnenschein & Co., London; E. P. Dutton & Co., N. Y., 1903. Exemplary tales, with brief prefatory commentary, including remarks on the dialect in Sierra Leone. Valuable for comparison with Carolina Gullah.

John Bennett, "Gullah: A Negro Patois," *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, Oct., 1908, Part I, pp. 332-347; Jan., 1909, Part II, pp. 39-52. A scholarly article on the dialect, in two parts.

III.

Within the last few years works have appeared, notable both in number and quality:

Ambrose E. Gonzales, *The Black Border, Gullah Stories of the Carolina Coast*, The State Co., 1922. 348 pp., 12 page Foreword, 42 stories, Gullah Glossary, Appendix (The Tar-Baby Story as told by Charles Colcock Jones, Jr., and by Joel Chandler Harris).

With Æsop Along the Black Border, July, 1924. IX-XIV, 298 pp., 60 fables, animal silhouettes by John Bennett.

The Captain, Stories of the Black Border, October, 1924. VII-XVI, 384 pp., 24 stories, 3 illustrations.

Laguerre, A Gascon of the Black Border, December, 1924. VII-XVI, 318 pp., 19 stories, 3 illustrations.

Mrs. Jane Screven Heyward, *Brown Jackets*, The State Co., 1923. 64 pp., 12 sketches.

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lina there has been a rather surprising re-awakening of interest in Gullah, resulting in a large amount of excellent work.

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113 Sadie E. Stewart, "Seven Folk-Tales from the Sea Islands, South Carolina," *JAFL*, XXXII, 394-396.

Elsie Clews Parsons, *Folk-Tales of the Sea Islands, South Carolina*, Memoir XVI of American Folk-Lore Society, 1923. XXV and 218 pp.

J. Palmer Lockwood, *Darkey Sermons from Charleston County*, The State Co., 1925. 45 pp., 3 sermons. ("Not the unadulterated Gullah of the rice-fields, but the patois of the negro who occasionally goes to Town." (i.e. Charleston.)

DuBose Heyward, *Porgy*, Geo. H. Doran Co., 1925, 196 pp.

Marcellus S. Whaley, *The Old Types Pass*, Christopher Pub. Co., 1925. V and 192 pp., 26 tales and sketches, glossary of 1500 words and 42 idioms; 5 songs with music; 8 illustrative sketches.

Saint Helena Island Spirituals, Recorded and Transcribed at Penn Normal, Industrial and Agricultural School, by N. G. J. Ballanta of Freetown, Sierra Leone, West Afries, G. Schirmer, Inc., 1925. Foreword V-XVIII, 93 pp., 113 spirituals.

IV.

Neither in dialect nor specifically and exclusively about the Negro, there are many books dealing with the history and background of the Carolina coast which are both interesting and useful as conveying the authentic low-country setting and atmosphere. Numbers three to eight are war-time pictures.

Charles Colcock Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes* (from their first introduction into this country in 1620 to the year 1842), Thomas Purse, Savannah, 1842. 277 pp. (The author is the father of the author of *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast.*)

Mrs. Henry R. Schoolcraft, *The Black Gauntlet: A Tale of Plantation Life in South Carolina*, J. B. Lippincott & Co., Philadelphia, 1860. 369 pp.

Lieut.-Col. Freemantle, *Three Months in the Southern States, April-June 1863*, William Blackwood & Sons, London, 1863. Pages 179-205 deal with the Carolina low-country.

J. T. Trowbridge, *The South*, L. Stebbins, Hartford, Conn., 1866. Pages 511-545 on Charleston and Sea Islands.

Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment*, Fields, Osgood and Co., Boston, 1870. 294 pp. Chapter IX on Negro Spirituals.

Frances Butler Leigh, *Ten Years on a Georgia Plantation Since the War*, Richard Bentley & Son, London, 1883. This is an implicit comment, almost an *amenda*, on the book of her famous mother, Frances Anne Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgia Plantation in 1838-1839*.

Elizabeth Hyde Botume, *First Days Amongst the Contrabands*, Boston, Lee and Shephard, 1893. 286 pp.

Letters from Port Royal, Written at the Time of the Civil War, ed. by Elizabeth Ware Pearson, Boston, 1906.

Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne, Written from the Sea Islands of South Carolina, 1862-1884, ed. Rupert Sargent Holland, Cambridge, 1912. 310 pp.

"Patience Pennington" (Mrs. Elizabeth W. Allston Pringle), *A Woman Rice Planter*, Macmillan Co., 1913. 447 pp.

I. Jenkins Mikell, *Rumbling of the Chariot Wheels*, The State Co., 1923. 273 pp.

Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*, Harvard University Press, 1925. Incidental Gullah Songs pages 168, 175, 184, 190, 196, 254, 256.

James Henry Rice, Jr., *Glories of the Carolina Coast*, R. L. Bryan Co., 1925. 133 pp.

Archibald Rutledge, *Tom and I on the Old Plantation*. Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1918; *Plantation Game Trails*, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1921; *Old Plantation Days*, Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1921; *Heart of the South*, The State Co., 1924; *Days Off in Dixie*; Doubleday, Page & Co., 1924.

Herbert Ravenel Sass, *The Way of the Wild*, 1925; *Adventures in Green Places*, 1926, Minton, Balch & Co.

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The most important contribution in this field consists of the four recent volumes comprising the "Black Border Series," by Ambrose E. Gonzales, of Columbia, S. C." This series contains a total of one hundred and forty-five sketches and stories and totals over thirteen hundred pages. Its chief interest for the general reader lies along literary lines, but in addition to its literary values, the series is an important contribution to philology. A large proportion of the narrative is related in authentic Gullah dialog, which Mr. Gonzales handles with a charm and mastery not attained by any other writer."

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[113]

"*The Black Border, Gullah Stories of the Carolina Coast*, 1922. *With Knop Along the Black Border*, July, 1924. *The Captain, Stories of the Black Border*, October, 1924. *Laguerre, A Gascon of the Black Border*, December, 1924. All four published by The State Co., Columbia, S. C.

See my review, *American Speech*, July, 1926.

Mr. Gonzales was peculiarly fitted to write Gullah. He is the grandson of a rice-planter. He was nursed by a faithful Negro mauma; as a child was waited upon by and played with Negroes; he hunted and fished with them. These long and familiar relationships have given him a rarely comprehensive and sympathetic understanding of the Negro temperament, which to the value of his work as literature add the authenticity of history and sociology.

In this connection it is interesting to note that Theodore D. *Jervey* in the closing chapter of his *The Slave Trade, Slavery and Color*, (The State Co., 1925), quotes from *The Black Border* in order to establish a desired argument. And the twelve sketches in *The Captain* (pp. 111-298), dealing with an attempted land settlement by Negroes in 1872, possess a charm and authenticity alike remarkable.

The flaw in many an otherwise good Negro dialect-story—and I am not now referring to those lamentable performances in which the crime is committed of making a darkey use the word "you-all" and mean thereby one person instead of a group of persons—but stories in which plot, setting and dialect are unimpeachably handled—the weakness is that the point of view is still Caucasian. The characters think, speak, and act like white people disguised for the nonce as Negroes; the hand is the hand of Ham but the voice is the voice of Japheth.

"To his skill in this respect, two fellow-writers of Gullah who have themselves successfully wrestled with its difficulties pay enthusiastic tribute. "As Ambrose Gonzales writes Gullah it is a dialect alive, full of graphic humor, and vividly grotesque; stripped and divested of its interior freight of fun, I think the text upon the page would still be humorous; the very type would go pranking by like the crowds at Mardi Gras." John Bennett, Review of *The Black Border*.

"Mr. Gonzales's Gullah is as perfect as it can be written, and he is easily the first honor man in that school. The low-country negro's description of a jackass to a negro who had never seen a jackass: "'E look same like mule, only mo' so,' is almost true of Mr. Gonzales's Gullah." John G. Williams, *De Old Plantation*, V, VI.

On July 11, 1926, since this article was written, death stilled the gifted pen of Mr. Gonzales forever. He achieved The Black Border Series under tremendous, well-nigh insuperable difficulties, the details of which are contained in a personal letter of his to a friend in Charleston, Dec. 30, 1924. The stroke which he refers to as slight was in reality severe: it impeded his walking, thickened his speech, and made writing a slow and laborious process. "As soon as I was up from a slight stroke I suffered in May, 1922," he wrote, "I set to work on the foreword and glossary of *The Black Border*, and brought out the book under handicaps that would have broken a spirit

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less inured to disappointment. As soon as the book was out—I had to give the proofs seventeen readings—I started to edit and bring out *In Darkest Cuba*. . . . . Realizing last January that my time was short, I promised myself that if I lived, I would publish three books this year and, thank the Lord, I've managed to do it.

"Of the thousand pages, more than nine hundred have been written since August of last year—written slowly and painfully, with a pencil on Sundays and at nights, while tired and worn out by my nine or ten hours at The State—duties I never miss.

"Now I'm through with dialect for a while. Each of these four *Black Border* books has its place, and I think they will live because of their sincerity and simplicity—but time will show."

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533 ally well equipped to deal authoritatively with Negro spirituals."

It is interesting to note that he traces the musical form of the spirituals directly back to African sources. "It is true," he says, "that in a great many instances one may meet with spirituals which actually are arrangements of strains of Hymn tunes, and especially so is this the case with present-day religious productions of the Negro; but it is also true that although there are evidences of the effect of the environment of the American Negro, yet these evidences are overbalanced by others which go to prove the African origin of these Negro Spirituals. . . .

"No one who has been in Africa and has heard the music of the Africans would doubt the sincerity of the statement that the characteristics of the music of the American Negro could be traced to an African stem."[*]

This seems an accurate statement of the case. It is much nearer the facts than the oft-quoted opinion of Booker T. Washington, that the spirituals are products of slavery.[**] They are products of slavery in the same sense though not in the same degree that they are products of Christianity. That is, both Christianity and slavery had a share in their make-up and undoubtedly were factors, but the real basis and structure are African. The part slavery played was to add intensity and poignancy to the native racial pathos and yearning, while Christianity furnished a remarkably appropriate and vivid background of concrete imagery, concepts, characters, and ideas." But back

[*]Dr. Frank Damrosch wrote of him: "He is undoubtedly doing fine work in arousing an interest in African music. He is, so far as I know, the only one who is competent to do this work." *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, Intro., IV.

[*]*Ibid.*, Foreword, VI. Compare James Weldon Johnson's somewhat parallel view, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, Preface, 23-27, and H. E. Krehbiel, *Afro-American Folksongs*, G. Schirmer, 1914.

[**]"They glow with the hope that the children of bondage will ultimately pass out of the wilderness of slavery into the land of freedom. In singing of a deliverance which they believed would surely come, with bodies swaying with the enthusiasm born of a common experience and of a common hope, they lost sight for a moment of the auction block, of the separation of mother and child, of sister and brother. . . . ." S. Coleridge-Taylor, *Transcriptions of Negro Melodies*, Preface.

[*]For an excellent expression on this point see Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, Preface, 20, 21. The whole preface is well worth reading. In it, however, and in the Preface to *The Second Book of American Spirituals* as well, there are occasional lapses from either fact or interpretation into stone-throwing. This, for example, from the latter volume, pages 14, 15, in connection with the

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533 of both Christianity and slavery lie first, the native racial
567 characteristics which were the really creative factors in
the spirituals; and second, the particular environment
114 which alone of all possible localities has called them into
178 being." This combination created them; Christianity
179 shaped and molded them; slavery lent fervor.

As to their sadness, long after the War and Emancipa-
533 tion even to the present day, the same yearning note has
152 persisted in Negro music. As two scholarly authorities
178 have well put it: "Slavery has passed, six decades of lib-
567 erty for the slave people have signalized the better civili-
zation, and there still remains among the Negroes the
same emotional nature, the same sad, plaintive, beautiful,
rhythmic, sorrow-feeling in their songs."[522] On internal
evidence it is impossible to date the spirituals. Those of
1880-1900 sound like those of 1840-1860.

Likewise in the prolific "Blues"[113] and the many songs
533 of jail, chain-gang, prison, and lonesomeness," which are
152 distinctly modern in composition, there is the same sad
appealing note, with much self-pity. There is also, be
(522) it said in passing, a good deal of humor, which is the com-
plement, not the opposite, of pathos.

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(529) scarcity of spirituals based on the birth or infancy of Christ: "The reason may be due in part to the fact that the anniversary of the birth of Christ was not, in the South, in any sense a sacred or religious holiday. Up to within recent years, at least, it has been celebrated chiefly with gunpowder and whiskey. It has there been the most secular, even the most profane of all holidays. In slavery times it was the one day on which the slaves were given a sort of freedom. The liberty of coming and going was greatly enlarged. On many plantations whiskey was distributed. The day was one given over to a good time; to singing, dancing and visiting; to guzzling, gluttony and debauchery. It is possible that it was a conscious part of the scheme of slavery to make Christmas a day on which the slaves through sheer excess of sensuous pleasure would forget their bonds."

"With the exception of a few statements here and there, like the following, the importance of environment has usually been overlooked: "If there is anything 'racial' about the spirituals and the blues, then there should be immediate ability to catch the intricate rhythm on the part of Negroes from Jamaica, Zanzibar, and Sierra Leone. Such is not the case, and we must conclude that they are the products of a certain American environment: The South. They are American folk-songs, built around Anglo-Saxon religious concepts." George E. Schuyler, "Correspondences," *The Nation*, July 14, 1926, p. 36.

(113) "Odum and Johnson, *The Negro and His Songs*, p. 19.

"See the chapters on "Blues" and "Songs of Jail, Chain Gang, and Policemen" in Odum and Johnson, *Negro Workaday Songs*, the chapter on "Blues" in Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*, and W. C. Handy, *Blues, An Anthology*, A. and C. Boni, N. Y., 1926.

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128 In the twenty-five years of research represented in the collection of slave songs, from which the comparatively few examples in this book have been culled, aid has been given me that words can never repay. Without the help of its many friends, this music of the Georgia Sea Islands could not have been preserved. Two of its admirers gave generous support in the four frightening years following 1930. One provided the funds needed to continue the work when the chastened Negroes would do for a quarter what they will not do today for a dollar; the other contributed her time, thought and general assistance.

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115 I wish that the names of all who have shared in this work could be given, but over a period of years I have become indebted to so many associates that it is inadvisable to mention more than those whose coöperation has produced far-reaching results.

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Parsons of Lakeville, Connecticut, and Wassaw Island, and the late Augustus Oemler of Savannah and St. Catherine's Island, gave me in February, 1909, my first opportunity to hear the singing of primitive slave songs on the coast of Georgia.

In later years the hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Jones, of Sea Island, furnished an opportunity to hear similar songs on Sapelo Island.

The friendly interest of the late Mrs. Clifton of The Ridge, McIntosh County, made me acquainted with the "ring-shout," which is so rarely seen, even by Southerners, that few realize "shouting" is a religious dance of African origin, and not a loud cry.

The Misses Dent, of Hofwyl Plantation, on the mainland in Glynn County, generously shared their knowledge of the songs that descendants of their family's slaves have been encouraged to preserve.

In Camden County, Mr. Chacey Kuehn, of Satilla Pines and New York City, gave valuable help in locating the best singers in the neighborhood of Tompkins, Burnt Fort, and Jerusalem.

The late Howard E. Coffin never lost an opportunity to share with others his delight in the slave songs. The applause of the cosmopolitan audiences he assembled at

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114 115 The Cloister, on Sea Island, did more for their prestige than years of single-handed effort.

On St. Simon's Island, Emma Postell Shadinan was an unfailing source of inspiration and information. Her death is an irreparable loss.

In the work of bolstering up the waning authority of the religious slave songs, it was necessary to take various steps that could never have been carried through without the assistance of the following friends and acquaintances. To them I wish to express my gratitude.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Franklin McElwain, of Sea Island and Boston;

Mr. and Mrs. Eugene W. Lewis, of Hamilton Plantation, St. Simon's Island, and Grosse Pointe, Michigan;

Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Kuehn, of Satilla Pines, Camden County, and Oak Park, Illinois;

Mrs. Henry Hodge, of Savannah;

Mrs. Burwell Atkinson and Mrs. Charles T. Nolan, of Incachee Plantation, Camden County, and St. Simon's Island;

Mrs. Kenneth Berrie, of Brunswick;

Mrs. George W. C. Drexel, of White Oak, Camden County, and Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania;

Mr. and Mrs. Grainger, of Colesburg, Camden County;

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Pettigrew, of Dauphin Plantation, Fort Liberté, Haiti, gave the opportunity in a never-to-be-forgotten month to hear repeatedly the primitive drum rhythms of Haiti;

Thanks are due Mrs. W. K. Bunner, of St. Catherine's, Ontario, for first-hand information concerning the music of Africa's Gold Coast Negroes;

To Margaret Davis Cate, I give special thanks for help in uncovering certain particulars concerning life on Georgia's coastal plantations.

To Lucile Bruce Brown, of Sea Island, I am greatly indebted for constructive criticism of different sections of the manuscript.

The publishers of *Country Life* courteously permit me to include the article on slave songs which I wrote for the issue of December, 1935.

I owe much to the information given me by Melville J. Herskovits and Joseph Greenberg, of Northwestern University, and Dr. Lorenzo D. Turner, of Fisk University. The results of their research in various aspects of Negro history have been most helpful.

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Through the kind offices of Chalmers S. Murray, of Charleston and Edisto Island, South Carolina, and Albert H. Stoddard, of Savannah, Georgia, and Daufuskie Island, South Carolina, the doors of their respective islands were opened to me. Their generous assistance will never be forgotten.

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To Foresta Hodgson Wood, I am deeply grateful for the many photographs she has generously contributed. To Clara E. Sipprell, Ralph Steiner, Dr. Orrin S. Wightman, Maxfield Parrish, Jr., and others I also give thanks for the use of various pictures.

To Creighton Churchill I am under obligation for his inspiring coöperation and sustained interest.

But for the help generously given by Mary Burnet, of Athens, Georgia, I doubt if this book would ever have been finished. My debt of gratitude to her is immeasurable.

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Thanks due these and other friends must not, however, obscure the fact that without the coöperation of the colored singers—the only people qualified through their racial background to present properly the traditional songs—there would have been no occasion for this book or these acknowledgments.

Although Julia Armstrong, of the singing Proctor family, has never told me the half of what she knows, particular thanks are due her for the help she has given since 1915. Her husband, Joe Armstrong, her brother, Willis Proctor, Cornelia and Edith Murphy, and others at the South End of St. Simon's have all aided in resurrecting old songs. Ben Davis, of the North End, comes of another family of singers, and special mention is due him for his loyalty and dependability. Bessie Cuyler, Catherine Ramsey, Peter Davis, Alec Stewart, and Mansfield Jackson have demonstrated the fine spirit on which the successful presentation of this type of music depends. There are other first-rate singers on the island, but the foregoing are singled out because they recognize that the requirements of the group take precedence over those of the individual.

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When a causeway was put across the marshes in 1924 and St. Simon's Island was connected with the mainland, we were able to include other Glynn County singers in our "Spiritual Singers Society of Coastal Georgia." Among those who have proved their devotion to the slave songs are Jeffry Union and Susyanna Vallion. Several of the children in the Broadfield contingent, trained by Susyanna and her assistants, Clara Roberts, "Coots" Hightower, and Gertrude Cohen, now sing at the Cabin on St. Simon's with the older group. In McIntosh County, Josephine Young is an able exponent of the old-style singing: so are Henry Shaw, Rosa Sallins, Julia Walker, Nancy and Alphonzo Thorpe.

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Camden County, too, has many excellent singers, but proximity to Jacksonville, Florida—as is the case with the section south of Savannah to the Ogeechee River—has not increased the popularity of the old-time music. Outstanding among those who sing in the traditional manner are "Major" Harris, Will Harrell, the Lukes, the Gibbses, and several other singing families that appear to have inherited the gift. There are hundreds of others listed in the membership book of our Society. Unfortunately it is impracticable to name them all, though their devotion is the only safeguard against oblivion that this music possesses.

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Formerly the allegiance of the singers to the slave songs was supported by religious fervor and by the authority of the praise-house and the church, but these strongholds are now given over to Europeanized book versions and vapid sacred hymns. Neither possesses the power to stir the blood, and in many churches—even where a vested choir sits in smug self-possession beside the pulpit—the congregation sings the traditional songs when collection time comes around: the deacons know from experience that the old tunes are potent money-getters, while the book-songs are not. It is well to recognize, however, that in a materialistic world loyalty needs something more solid to stand on than religious exaltation. For this reason the help of the white friends who have given their moral and financial support to the preservation of the slave music is beyond price. To them this book is gratefully dedicated.

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An Explanation

•114 There are certain matters connected with the singing of these slave songs that should be cleared up in the very beginning. First and foremost, however, it may be well to give my credentials. I am frequently asked: "How did you—a Northerner—come to interest yourself in this music?" The question is legitimate, and deserves an answer. In fact I have a fellow feeling for the Atlanta gentleman who said: "What right have you to know anything about it?" I always wish to put just these words to writers who grow authoritative on the subject—and, as we all know, what is sauce for the gander should be sauce for the goose.

I was born in a Quaker community, thirty miles south of Philadelphia,[1] where descendants of slaves—and some ex-slaves themselves—were the only singers. Theirs was the only music worthy of the name that I heard in my youth. In those days members of the Society of Friends were not the liberal people they are now. They had no "hireling ministers"; their meetings were silent until the Spirit moved one of the older—and approved—members to speak. All forms of art, including music, were taboo among the overseers of our meeting,[2] and none was heard in the Friends' Academy I attended up to the time I was sixteen. Paradoxically enough, their abolitionist views attracted a singing race into their midst.[3] Their tolerance was such, however, that as far as I could see they never attempted to curb its musical exuberance in the kitchen or in the fields. Perhaps, with them as with me, the Negro's music filled a real need.

For many generations prior to the War Between the States, colored people—mostly from tide-water Virginia—had secretly crossed the river from Delaware into

[1] One of my ancestors, John Pledger, was the first of the Salem Quakers to reach America. He arrived, via Maryland, in January, 1674–5. His wife and small son came with the founder of the colony, John Fenwick, in September, 1675.

[2] The stand taken by the Quakers represented a reaction from the frivolity of Charles II's day.

[3] Their opposition to war created still another anomalous situation: Lincoln emancipated the slaves, yet he did not keep the country out of war. In my family, the feeling against him was bitter on this account. My mother took the stand that killing was a far more serious offense than holding a race in bondage. In consequence I saw Lincoln in the same light as did the Southerners—but for a different reason.

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● 114 Salem County, New Jersey, where they found sanctuary among the Friends.[4] One of the stations of the underground railroad was located in our community, and the consideration shown the runaway and manumitted slaves caused them to settle there in such numbers that by 1840 they needed, and built, a large two-story church, and, after emancipation, still another. In my childhood they so greatly outnumbered the white voters that we had a colored overseer of the roads. At that time there was no lack of spontaneous music and laughter among them. However, in the late eighties, when a railroad was put through their village, the sophisticated Philadelphia Negroes were enabled to show the country cousins that they were hopelessly out-of-date. Then it was that the dull but stylish hymns of the white man supplanted those of the old régime, and standardized behaviour became the rule.

114 533 I did not hear the slave songs again until I visited the coast of Georgia in 1909. As we all know, opportunity rarely knocks more than once, and this time I took steps to insure that the songs should not escape me. Herein, I believe, rests my right to know something about them.

The Negroes frankly say that it was a good thing I arrived on St. Simon's when I did, and I know that if I had been there years earlier I could have saved many priceless songs which are now lost. These primitive songs—like the carvings of Africa—had been ridiculed, and the Negroes were ashamed to sing them in the presence of strangers. It took considerable brain-cudgeling to find a way to overcome their feeling that the traditional mode of expression was peculiar and old-fashioned, and to show the singers that many white people recognized its beauty.[5] As can be seen from the photographs illustrating this book, these colored people have regained faith in their birthright—and I hope it will last.

(128) Another question asked me is the reason for avoiding the term "spiritual." Today it is applied to almost any religious song in Negro dialect, regardless of its age or

[4] *From the probated will of the Quaker, John Fenwick, it is evident that in 1683 there was one "Black" too many in our settlement. He disinherited his "grand childe Elizabeth Adams totally . . . except the Lord open her eyes to see her abominable transgrescen against him, me & her poore father, by giving her true repentance & forsakeing yt Black vt hath beene the ruine of her . . ." About 12 miles south-east of Salem is a town called Othello and a few miles farther east is Gouldtown where Elizabeth and her "blackamoor" are said to have located.*

[5] *For years I tried to think of a way to rekindle interest in the old songs. In the dark of a wintry four A. M., I awakened with the full-blown answer: form a society and admit only those who could sing in the old way. The plan was nothing but good common sense—and it has worked.*

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origin, and because of its indiscriminate use I have suppressed it whenever possible.[6]

I notice that the only writers who used the term "spirituals," prior to 1909, were those who collected the bulk of their material in South Carolina. References were made to Georgia "spirituals," but Georgia was off the beaten track and, in consequence, few examples were given. In such collections as Hampton's *Cabin and Plantation Songs*, in editions up to 1909, no mention is made of "spirituals"—the songs are called "slave hymns." Nor does the name occur in Barton's *Old Plantation Hymns*, published in 1898. Our Negroes in southern New Jersey, who had come from Virginia, never used it. The first time I heard it applied to a Negro song was in 1909 on St. Catherine's—a sea island half way between the Savannah River and the Altamaha. I was told by Old Quarterman, born in Liberty County, and by Julia, born on St. Simon's Island, that they always called their own songs "spirituals," although one old grandmother called them "ant'ems" to the end of her days.

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But why was the name adopted by the slaves of South Carolina and Georgia and not by those of the states to the northward? A bit of early history may perhaps supply the answer. When a band of Puritans who had settled at Dorchester, Massachusetts, in 1630, heard of the need of work among the Indians of South Carolina, they migrated with their pastor in 1695 and settled at a spot they named Dorchester, on the Ashley River, about twenty-six miles from Charleston. Here they stayed until 1750, but the unhealthy location caused them to move on to St. John's Parish in Georgia. There, they established another Congregational church which they called Midway. At this church the Negroes sat in the gallery as was the custom in various other places.[7] Olmstead in *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States* (1853–54) gives an account of the concern shown by members of this Midway community for the moral enlightenment of their slaves and says, "I heard them spoken of even so far away as Virginia and Kentucky. I believe that in no other district has there been displayed as general and long-continued an interest in the spiritual well-being of the Negroes."[8]

[6] Ben Davis told me the way he knew the age of a song was by the way it made him feel. "The old ones make you feel good, the new ones don't make you feel anything." I know of no better test.

[7] Where there was no gallery they sat in the rear of the church—if a separate service was not held for them.

[8] Olmstead also tells of a religious service held by the crackers in an isolated section south of Savannah. To this day such a service can be seen and heard in conservative Negro churches. It is significant that in the North white people were never encouraged to go into a Negro

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523 leading a religious song; a fact which makes it advisable, in writing down the words, to use as few punctuation marks as possible. The effect of an inexhaustible supply of breath is achieved through the simple expedient of the "basers"—as members of the chorus are called—"spelling" the leader, who gets his breath at the end of a narrative line while the chorus sings the response or the next line. In the old days, here, as in Africa, the virtuoso did not exist, and the basers played as important a part in group singing as the one who sang the leading lines. Now, however, there is a tendency to disregard the customary technique, which demands that the basers remain silent until the last word or two of the leader's narrative line is sung. In authentic slave music no nuances are observed,[12] but the absence of any variation in tone is not conspicuous when alternation between leader and chorus produces changes in volume. When the whole group sings in unison, however, the effect is extremely dull and monotonous.

533 One of the few trustworthy writers on the subject of Negro spirituals, Jeannette
• 114 Robinson Murphy, could also sing them. It is regrettable that her book Southern
198 *Thoughts for Northern Thinkers* (1904) is out of print. In the section on "The Sur-
197 vival of African Music in America," she tells us: "During my childhood my observations were centered upon a few very old negroes, whose mothers and fathers came directly from Africa, and upon many others whose grandparents were African born, and I early came to the conclusion, based upon negro authority, that the greater part of their music, their methods, their scale, their type of thought, their dancing, their patting of feet, their clapping of hands, their grimaces and pantomime, and their gross superstitions came straight from Africa." Even at this late date, it is possible to find ex-slaves in remote spots on the coast of South Carolina and Georgia who can—if their confidence is won—substantiate practically every one of her conclusions. It cannot be done, however, by sitting peacefully in a library chair or spending a comfortable summer vacation on the campus of a Negro school. Writers from New England who have studied the songs of the Negro, mostly in libraries, are prone to emphasize the importance of book evidence. They do not appear to realize that their conclusions are valueless without work in the field among the children and grandchildren of native Africans—who are our only authorities.

As Carter Woodson truly says, the proof offered by the writers who claim a white origin for the Negro spirituals "would not pass the test of any research depart-

[12] A Negro quartet that sings in a staccato fashion, or renders the last verse of a song pianissimo shows clearly that it has taken its cue from the white man.

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533 ment of a real university." Mrs. Murphy goes on to say that "Some of their later
114 songs, it is true, we must technically call 'modified African,' but how far the original
177 song elements have been altered (and usually not for the better) by contact with
178 American life is a question of fact, and can only be settled by a careful comparison of the songs as sung among the natives of Africa and the changed forms in which their modified ones are found today in the South. It must be determined in each case, and cannot be settled by any general theory or formula. . . . The stock is African, the ideas are African, the patting and dancing are all African, and those who study this weird music at short range have no difficulty in recalling the . . . conditions that gave it birth."

533 Mrs. Murphy stresses the fact that the traditional way of singing slave spirituals must be learned in childhood when the voice is flexible, and—if you are to become proficient—you must listen to the older Negroes, preferably ex-slaves. Every characteristic she mentions is duplicated in the singing of the Negroes of the Georgia coast. As in South Carolina, they break every law of musical phrasing and notation, yet there is nothing to be found on the printed page to show how this is done. For instance, a prominent note is embellished with a variety of small notes which used to be called "trimmin's," tones are sung not found in our scale, humming is employed that is not easily transcribed, emphasis is placed—according to our ideas—where it does not belong, and one note is not left until the singer has a firm hold on the next—a method which produces the undulating effect that characterizes the genuine spirituals. The appearance of never taking breath,[13] already described, is another characteristic that must be observed in singing songs of this type. Unfortunately, the trick of dropping from a high note to a low one on a prolonged one-syllable word is less common than in my youth, but the arbitrary division of a monosyllable, and the placing of emphasis on the second half, are as popular as they ever were.

In our music, the accents generally fall on the stressed syllables of the spoken word and on the regular beats of the music, but as Natalie Curtis-Burlin tells us in *Negro Folk Songs* "the accents fall most frequently on the short notes and on the naturally unstressed beats, producing what we call 'syncopation' of a very intricate and highly-developed order. The peculiarity of this syncopation is best explained to the layman by drawing attention to the way in which the natural rhythms of the

[13] As Mrs. Murphy says, the breath should be carried over "from line to line and verse to verse, even at the risk of bursting a blood vessel."

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Introduction

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This book of Mrs. Parrish's is a singularly sincere and valuable contribution to the subject of Afro-American song. It is first-hand work with an excellent background. The data are the result of personal experience of Negro song at its sources. The approach is that of a writer who by fortunate circumstance was peculiarly equipped for her studies. Her first experience of the Negroes and their music was that of the girl in a Quaker community whose Abolitionist tendencies had made their locality first a station of the Underground Railroad in slave times, and later a haven where ex-slaves gathered and sang. The vitiating influence of the white teacher bent upon uplifting and de-racing the Negro was not to be felt where the blacks greatly outnumbered the whites, and where the whites, being Quakers, gave music a wide berth in their religious services, permitting the Negro to sing his songs in his own native and unashamed way. Nor, until the eighties, were these singers made self-conscious or musically corrupted by the sophisticated Negroes of the near-by city. They were heard by a young girl at the most impressionable period of her life. The quality of the original songs and the way they were sung left indelible memories.

Many years later, Mrs. Parrish found herself the chatelaine of a home on St. Simon's Island on the coast of Georgia, in a district which proved a veritable sanctuary of Afro-American music, and from which her investigations branched out into neighboring territories of the coasts and islands of Georgia and South Carolina, eventually reaching the Bahamas and Haiti. It is probable that the first slaves transported to America were landed near the place which became her Southern home. The beginnings of one of the most mysterious and fruitful amalgamations of racial musical elements that music knows may well have been here.

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How old are these folk songs? And are they still being produced? This last is a question of great importance, and not only where this one issue is concerned. The answer concerns the entire evolution of the musical art. Mrs. Parrish believes that the body of the American Negro's music accumulated within a period, roughly, of one hundred and fifty years. There are those who would dispute this statement,

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533 since allegedly new "spirituals" keep turning up in many quarters. (Mrs. Parrish's theory of the origin of this word is worthy of remark: that it was bestowed as a result of the proselytizing of Puritans from Dorchester, Massachusetts, who brought the Bay Psalm Book with them to Dorchester, South Carolina, with ensuing consequences.) But are these fresh creations? Repeatedly, songs believed to be new have proved to be songs well-known in some other place than the one in which they were found. Thus it transpired, in the case of a certain "new" American Negro song, that it was the precise equivalent of a chant well-known and still heard in Africa! In this connection the background of African origins of American Negro song, dance, religion, and ceremonial is of special interest, and a further testimony to the soundness and the zeal with which the author has conducted her
121 investigations. Is it, then, that the singer who improvises, as he believes, in reality
533 draws subconsciously upon a deep well of racial experience and memory? The idea is extremely suggestive. And if this should be the case, how far does the identical principle apply to the acts of individually developed composers? Thus the peasant Dvořák turns with much simplicity to Czech folk song for a musical expression which is natural, rather naïve, and fresh and eloquent; while a Sibelius, a composer of more subjective and complex mind, composes, as a young man, the *Kullervo* Symphony, and then goes into the forests of Karelia and hears the Finnish peasants singing the runes of the Kalevlaka in phrases similar, in spirit and contour, to the ones from which he has made his score. One goes farther up the creative spiral, and discovers the stylistic and spiritual qualities of the folk songs of races transmuted in the music of a Mozart, a Beethoven, a Verdi, or a Wagner. In this sense the folk song of a race is all-inclusive. It would then appear that however highly developed the individual speech of a great composer, his expression, in proportion to its sincerity, is in essence that of his forebears and his environment. It is important to bear this
533 aspect of Mrs. Parrish's studies in mind—important not only as it bears upon her earnest and greatly needed effort to restore to its proper place in art the uncorrupted song of the American Negro, but also in its bearing upon the cultural present and future of the American people.

533 How significant the relationship is can be realized if in the first place we dis-
114 pense with the misleading and ridiculous theory that Negro religious music is an imitation or variation of the hymns of the white. That is a most unfortunate product of pedantry, sophism, or racial prepossession, as the case may be. It is a nonsense which should long since have been dispersed by the plain evidence of ordinary hu-

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533 man cars and the simplest intelligence. But it has stuck in various quarters, and
•114 been echoed by those willing to sit between library shelves—or not even in such learned quarters—and fit facts to prepossessions, or let others do their thinking for them.

Now if this were merely a doctrine and refuge for the narrow-minded, it would have done no particular harm to anyone but themselves. The unfortunate thing is the manner in which the doctrine is inculcated, in the name of education, in the mind of the Negro, and especially in the mind of the Negro teacher who must lead his own people to "enlightenment." What is to be said, not of that teacher, but of those who have taught him, or her, to say that, of course, if the Negro students in the class can't learn to sing their songs as they should—i.e., as ancestral tradition and spirit and style dictate—they must be "corrected." Anyone who has listened, first to the singing of Negroes naturally and inimitably expressing themselves in song, and then hearkened to the vitiated and Bowdlerized versions of these same songs, conventionally harmonized, rhythmed, and performed by a frocked Negro choir, will know without further inquiry the profound and inescapable difference between Negro folk music and the material it is supposed to emulate, and will say amen to the indignant words of Mrs. Parrish, to the effect that, while slavery of the body is terrible enough, slavery of the mind may be an even deeper wrong and a greater destruction.

533 One wonders, indeed, if the Negro composer can ever arrive who will reveal in an individual way the genius of his race, under these well-nigh insuperable obstacles to sound education and a liberating development. How is that composer to be freed, instead of inhibited, in the expression of what is within him? If such a development ever does occur, we as the American people will have evolved, for at least one phase of our expression, a music of new potencies and horizons, of which, as the author of this book observes, there is crying need in the whole world of sophisticated modern composition today. In the meantime, for the white musician as well as his darker colleague, it is of the utmost importance to realize the strength that there is in the product of Afro-American folk music, to conserve it in its original essence, and to understand its real values.

000 One can go farther. One can say that the principle involved has a vital bearing upon future cultural developments of the world after the present war. The optimists among us—and the writer is one of them—see in this conflagration, not only an end of at least some of the terrors which have held back the social development of

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with a neck of wood attached, and fitted with four strings.[45] A Georgian I know called her devoted colored nurse "Dah," which means mother in an African dialect. Many Southerners are familiar with the odd word swanga as applied to a proud, boastful Negro. They probably assume, as I did, that it is a corruption of "swagger," but like the word "shout" it is another African word that happens to sound something like one of ours. For the same reason such African names as *Sandi, Suki, Aba, Bina,* and *Beti,* that are quite similar to our diminutives, have passed unnoticed, while such names as *Pinda, Mandigo, Dembo, Sambo, Cudjo, Quash,* and the Arabic names on Sapelo arrest our attention.

The survival of African food names such as gumbo or okra (famous in New Orleans), benne[46] (that figures in Charleston's special candy), goober or peanuts, suggests that African cooking methods as well as names survive in Southern kitchens. Much interesting material on this highly controversial subject has been furnished by Herskovits in an article entitled "What Has Africa Given America?"[47] Of all who write about the Negro, I find the conclusions of this well-known anthropologist the most convincing. What he says on the subject of Negro music, on certain "musical" aspects of Southern speech, the survival of African idioms and pronunciation, and the impress on Southern white children of the courtesy instilled into them by their colored nurses ties up with my years of experience with the Negroes.

It may be only a coincidence, but *mpinda* and *nguba* are both Congo names for peanut, and the Cater family, of Kelvin Grove, had a slave called Pinda, who was the daughter of their faithful Dembo.[48] Dembo's father was an African prince, to whom a gun was of greater value than a son—probably there was a surplus of the latter and a shortage of the former. At any rate Dembo was sold into slavery for a

[45] Cable tells us in "The Dance in Place Congo" that "for the true African dance. . . . a sensual, devilish thing tolerated only by Latin-American masters, there was wanted the dark inspiration of African drums and the banjo thrump and strum." Perhaps this accounts for the banjo not being heard in Georgia—with its strictly English background.

[46] The tradition on St. Simon's is that once you plant benne, you must keep it up. "Old man Death'll catch you if you don't." If you are ill, you can at least throw it out the window and give it half a chance to grow.

[47] New Republic, September 4, 1935.

[48] Dembo was the "driver" who had charge of the other slaves under the white overseer. When the overseer killed his master, Thomas Cater, in the neighborhood of 1805, Dembo saved the life of Thomas' only son, Benjamin, and looked out for his young master's interests so whole-heartedly that he earned the hatred of the other slaves. When he died they buried him on the North boundary of the plantation as far from their own graveyard as they could place him.

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461 519 forms of art in which his African forebears excelled. However, it must be kept in mind that *Art for Art's* sake never existed in the life of the African natives. Their dances and their music were not separated from daily life, and until about 1900 this (179) attitude persisted among our Negroes in the rural sections. Now it is the fashion to imitate the white man, and the results are unspeakably dull.

533 17 Survivals, such as these I mention, have come to light—more or less as a side issue—in searching for links connecting the dances and songs of our Georgia Negroes with those of the African natives. As far as the songs are concerned, it would be gratifying to be able to say definitely what proportion of African influence is shown and what should be attributed to America. Unfortunately the methods of research employed today by most musicologists do not produce results that can be considered reliable. I would not accept as authoritative the findings of an anthropologist who based his conclusions concerning the African food tabu found in Georgia on what he learned from me. And I am no more willing to accept the word of the musicologist who depends on transcriptions found in books, and on inadequate phonograph records, to decide what the slave music owes to Europe.

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In my experience transcriptions and records are both too susceptible to the biased interpretation of musicians trained in the European idiom. Far too many know nothing about African music, and do not care to learn anything about it at first-hand from the ex-slaves and their children. When they stop voicing the suspicion that the Negro spirituals derived their syncopation from Europe, probably from the Scottish folksong—then, and not before, shall I be ready to take their pronouncements seriously.

African Songs

533 171

FREEWILLUM

James Rogers (born in Liberty County) tells me this song, and the one following, were sung by Dublin Scribben. To use his own words: "Ole man Dublin he belong' to de Andersons o' Sunbury an' every day or two Miss Bertha would sen' me ober fo' him—to talk de ole African talk. I heered him, but I was too small to remember what he said, but I remember de songs 'cause I always p'int it on my mind about de t'ing."[51]

(179) The first song did not sound like English, but when Rogers divorced the words

[51] Tunes mean far more to the Negroes than words, *I* notice, and are not easily forgotten.

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CHAPTER THREE

Afro-American Shout Songs

535 There appears to be a difference of opinion regarding the use of the word
114 "shout" in designating the religious ring-dance, which was enjoyed during planta-
192 tion days after prayer meeting and church service. Formerly writers thought that the Negro used the word because dancing was so sinful that it was wise to avoid even the name. But Dr. L. D. Turner has discovered that the Arabic word Saut (pronounced like our word "shout"), in use among the Mohammedans of West Africa, meant to run and walk around the Kaaba. I believe he has provided the right explanation for the difference in the meaning of the word, as used by the whites and the blacks, for I have seen the Negroes do the holy dance around the pulpit in their churches in such a manner.

535 Shouting appears to be of two types: Along the coast of Georgia and South Carolina the most popular form is the ring-shout, in which a number of dancers move counter-clockwise in a circle. (Illustration 22.[A]) Occasionally individuals are seen in church using the same rhythmic shout step. In North Carolina and Virginia, however, the solo performance is apparently the only form in use, and the ring-shout seems to be unknown.

535 Those who have traveled in Africa, and have seen native dancing, are con-
171 vinced that the shout of the American Negro is nothing more than a survival of an
198 African tribal dance, and that the accompanying chants in their form and melody are quite as typical of Africa as the dance itself.[1] It is recognized, of course, that the
(199) words of the Old Testament have been substituted by the Negro for those of his native land. When the slaves grew more familiar with the English language, they evolved the more complicated religious songs that are now popularly called spirituals.

[1] Records Nos. 6 and 10 of the series made in the Belgian Congo by the Denis-Roosevelt expedition are strikingly similar.

A. [For Illustration 22, see Category 535, plate facing p. 128--Analyst]

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15. *The Author and Sunyanna in Front of the School-House*

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BAPTISM

795 533 On a frosty Sunday morning many years ago, I happened to be on the bank of the Frederica River south of the Fort. From a distance I heard the Negroes singing what sounded like a dirge, but as they came closer I found it was a baptismal song, sung by the procession which had formed, as is customary, at the church a mile away.[12] It was headed by the minister, followed by his assistants, the deacons and other members in pairs, while the "candidates" brought up the rear. The girls were dressed in white, but the boys wore ordinary overalls and work shirts. The solemn dignity of the occasion was impressive. Joe Lowman, one of the assisting preachers, with great earnestness addressed the congregation. He exhorted those of his hearers who had not been baptized to take no chances. In an intimate conversational tone he gave his views on the subject. He wanted it clearly understood that he was not prepared to say, "nobody was going to be saved who had only had his head sprinkled"—but he, for one, was not for disobeying instructions. The Lord ordered us to go down into the water, and that was all there was about it. It was like sending a boy to the store for potatoes; if he brought home turnips it would not be the same thing at all.

795 794 [793]

[782] After the discourse and the usual prayers,[13] which were punctuated in the African manner with encouraging responses, rhythmically delivered, the officiating minister went down into the river to the spot selected by the deacon, who, with his staff to show the depth, had preceded him. While those on the river bank sang

[794] [577] [12] Before leaving the church the minister calls his congregation to order, and gives them some last-minute instructions. One cautioned his flock to conduct themselves on the way to the water in an orderly manner befitting the solemnity of the occasion. He said: "Now, I don't want any talkin' or laughin'.—Don' y'u begin to tell about your bean patch an' your peas. This ain' no time for it."

[114] [196] [13] In a recent book the assertion is made that our Negroes "pray to the river" when they are baptized. This sounds like an African survival until it is learned that "to" means "beside" in this instance. It is no wonder that those who are unfamiliar with our Negroes and their use of words make curious mistakes.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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795 "Wade in the Water," the candidates, each escorted by a church member, followed
794 to the water's edge. There the girls' skirts were tied above their knees to prevent undignified billowing, and the assisting deacon led each candidate to the spot where the minister stood in about two-and-a-half feet of water.

The Negroes probably follow the usual procedure of white Baptists; however, I find that no two preachers use precisely the same words, though the substance is (788) always the same: "In obedience to the commands of our Lord Jesus Christ I baptize thee"—and at this point the immersion takes place—"in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, Amen"—and up comes the sputtering, shivering candidate. When the procession returns to the church, the ones who have just been baptized line up and receive the "right hand of fellowship" from the minister and the church members—and not until then may they consider themselves as safely within the fold.

Although the water was bitterly cold that February morning, the young people behaved very well, and only one squealed a little—which was considered very bad form. If you do not come up like a lamb it is "suspicioned" that your conversion has not been authentic, and the baptism may need to be performed again.

795 In the old days, when the Negroes were closer to Africa, baptisms in the tide-
178 water section took place punctiliously, no matter how inconvenient the hour, on the
(783) outgoing tide.[14] In the interior, of course, where rivers and streams can be depended upon to carry the candidate's sins away from him, a baptism can be safely set for any appointed hour. Now, cement tanks are built in the yards of conventional churches, and another picturesque custom will soon be a thing of the past. Many a time have I gone to the South End or to Frederica, before sunrise, in the hope of learning something new. Something new was not always forthcoming, but the picture in the low morning light was worth going miles to see.

(114) [14] *The stress laid by Negro Baptists upon baptism being performed on the outgoing tide*
177 *lends support to the theory, held by Melville Herskovits, that the strong adherence to the ritual of baptism among Negro Christians is related to "the great importance of the river-cult in Africa, particularly in view of the fact that, as has often been observed, river-cult priests were sold into slavery in great numbers."* (Handbook of Social Psychology.)

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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long canoe, hollowed out of the trunk of a single cypress and rowed by six negroes, who were singing loudly and keeping time to the stroke of their oars." He went on to say: "For many a mile we saw no habitations, and the solitude was profound; but our black oarsmen made the woods echo to their song. One of them taking the lead, first improvised a verse, paying compliments to his master's family, and to a celebrated black beauty of the neighborhood, who was compared to the 'red bird.' The other five then joined in the chorus, always repeating the same words. Occasionally they struck up a hymn, in which the most sacred subjects were handled with strange familiarity, and which, though nothing irreverent was meant, sounded oddly to our ears, and, when following a love ditty, almost profane."

Lyell's account of his canoe trip from Hopeton to visit Mr. Couper's summer residence on St. Simon's Island, fifteen miles distant, is of interest for several reasons. In describing the Negro houses on Butler Island, where the party landed on their way, he tells us they "were neat, and whitewashed, all floored with wood, each with an apartment called the hall, two sleeping rooms, and a loft for the children" —which is contrary to what Fanny Kemble had written about the selfsame houses, a few years earlier. He also mentioned seeing ricks of rice raised on props five feet high, to protect them from the sea, which, during hurricanes, has been known to rise five or six feet. His observations on the mental development of the slaves are particularly significant: "It is evident that on these rice farms, where the negroes associate with scarcely any whites, except the overseer and his family, and have but little intercourse with the slaves of other estates, they must remain far more stationary than where, as in a large part of Georgia, they are about equal in number to the whites, or even form a minority. . . . In Glynn County, where we are now residing, there are no less than four thousand negroes to seven hundred whites,[24] whereas in Georgia generally there are only 281,000 in a population of 691,000 or more whites than colored people."

I give these figures because they explain why more distinctive slave songs can be found in the rice swamps and cotton plantations of the adjoining sea islands than in the Piedmont section where Anglo-Saxon influence has always predominated. In all probability we have the malaria mosquito and the absentee landlords to thank for this. In Africa the black race had developed an immunity to malaria—which they

[24] About the same ratio as when I first went to St. Simon's. Charles Spalding Wylly states that in 1810 almost every acre of arable land on St. Simon's was under cultivation. There were fourteen plantations and a slave population of about 1200.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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are now losing—and the resistance of the slaves to "the miasma of the rice fields" enabled them to take care of the crop during the "pestilential season" with the minimum of white supervision. In consequence, all white residents who could leave [a] fled at nightfall to the "salts"—as the sea marshes were called—or to the dry and higher pine land, whichever might be nearer, and the Negroes were left very much to themselves. It requires no stretch of the imagination to assume that the beloved rhythms and dances that had been brought from Africa were kept alive in just this way. For which let me say—God be praised! I have never been able to believe that all virtue was vested in the white man or his music.

Another statement of Lyell's is so accurate that it should be given here. He tells us that "The slaves identify themselves with the master, and their sense of their own importance rises with his success in life." Mrs. Shadman, who knew all the ex-slaves on St. Simon's, told me that Maum Rhina at Cannon's Point was heard to say: "I hol' my head jus' as high as my Missus. I'se a Wylly nig'ah." The Wylly Negroes always felt they were superior to those of the Hazzards, who lived on the adjoining plantation. The feeling of animosity that has persisted for more than a century among the descendants of the slaves of the two plantations may be because of the duel over a boundary dispute, in which young Wylly was killed by his neighbor, Dr. Hazzard.

In spite of the Negroes being passionately fond of music and dancing, the activity of the Baptist and Methodist missionaries was such before 1845 that Lyell tells us: "On the Hopeton Plantation above twenty violins have been silenced." The ban on secular music was the same in the vicinity of Beaufort, South Carolina. The editors of *Slave Songs of the United States* reported that they never saw a musical instrument among the Port Royal freedmen, and mentioned that the last violin, owned by a "wordly man," disappeared from Coffin's Point in 1861. They expressed regret that they could not obtain enough secular songs to make a division by themselves, and went on to say: "It is . . . already becoming difficult to obtain these songs. Even the 'spirituals' are going out of use on the plantations, superseded by the new style of religious music, 'closely imitated from the white people.' " The statement made by the editors that "The same songs are used for rowing as for shouting," holds true on the coast of Georgia, and it is interesting to find that the identical tunes were favorites the length of the sea-island chain between the Peedee and the Satilla Rivers. (Map, page xxxii.)

The similarity of the speech, customs, and music of the Gullah Negroes through-

[a] The terms of the overseer's contract required his presence on the plantation except under urgent circumstances.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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184 out this section is not surprising to those who have studied its social and economic
●114 conditions at first hand—or have carefully read *Seed from Madagascar* by Duncan
Clinch Heyward. This gentleman's words are authoritative. He learned planting
114 methods and the management of Negro labor at first hand on the Combahee swamp
plantations of his paternal ancestors in South Carolina and at the Clinch Plantation,
called Refuge, on the Satilla River in Georgia, where his maternal ancestors were
also rice planters.

175 In *American Humor*, Constance Rourke quotes a traveler as saying in 1795
522 that "The blacks are the great humorists of the nation." She goes on to tell us how
533 Negro humor has always been abundant, and how, from it, early minstrels drew as
from a primal source. She also says that many minstrels had lived in the South and
West and knew the Negro at first hand. One of them saw an old peddler of water-
melons with a donkey cart in a Georgia town, and followed him about until he had
mastered his lingo, cries, and snatches of song, which may account for the similarity
175 of our Negro secular songs to those of the minstrel stage. Few of the white singers,
533 however, gave credit where it was due. Miss Rourke states that "Plantation owners
[501] on the Mississippi had crews of black oarsmen who sang as they rowed and impro-
[461] vised good-natured verses to match the occasions of the day. . . .[28] A western poet
[567] declared that 'among the earliest original verses of the West were sundry African
melodies celebrating the coon hunt and the vicissitudes of river navigation.' The
Negro was to be seen everywhere in the South and in the new Southwest, on small
farms and great plantations, on roads and levees. He was often an all but equal mem-
ber of many a pioneering expedition. He became, in short, a dominant figure in spite
of his condition and commanded a definite portraiture."

533 Because of his position in democratic communities it is readily seen why the
197 songs of the Negro have left their stamp on those of the hill-billy and the cowboy;
and when he attended the same revival meetings as the whites—as he frequently did
—his mode of singing undoubtedly exerted as much influence upon their religious
songs as his secular music does today upon our radio singers.

[28] They carried on a tradition that was characteristic of the South Carolina and Georgia coast. Liverpool, who was stroke oar of the Butler Island crew of ten men, told me they rowed a cypress dugout, thirty-three feet long, made from one immense log. His favorite rowing song was "Zion," but others preferred "Knee-bone." Mrs. G. V. Cate tells us, in Our Todays and Yesterdays, "there was a spirit of rivalry among the planters to have the best boat . . . and a desire on the part of the slaves to sing the best songs. The oarsmen of one plantation would never sing the songs belonging to another plantation," and when a boat passed at night it would be known from the song to what plantation the singers belonged.

[177] In A Walk across Africa, Grant describes a very large canoe—hollowed out of an immense tree—that carried a ton and a half.

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PREFACE

THIS VOLUME is one of three which have grown out of a study of Negro culture on St. Helena Island, South Carolina, made under the joint auspices of the Institute for Research in Social Science of the University of North Carolina and the Social Science Research Council. *Black Yeomanry*, by T. J. Woofter, Jr., contains a comprehensive treatment of the whole round of life on St. Helena Island today, and *A Social History of the Sea Islands*, by Guion Griffis Johnson, sets forth the historical antecedents of the culture of the sea island region.

The present volume deals with certain major aspects of the folk culture of St. Helena Island, namely, dialect, folk songs, and folklore. The section on dialect attempts to describe the Gullah dialect traits. The section on folk songs describes the status of folk songs on St. Helena Island today and then digresses at some length upon the question of the relation of American Negro music to English and American folk music. The general reader may be disappointed in such a discussion, but I feel that this is the time and place for it to be put forth. Mr. Ballanta's excellent collection entitled *St. Helena Island Spirituals* makes it unnecessary for me to publish additional spirituals. At the same time, his work, with its insistence on the African origin of the various characteristics of the Negro spirituals, makes it imperative that someone point out that there is much to be said for a white ancestry for the music of the spirituals. This I have attempted to do, the result being somewhat supplementary to Mr. Bal-

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128 lanta's contributions, and at the same time something of a
•114 note of caution to those who are too quick to ascribe to Africa the peculiarities of American Negro folk music.

The final section sketches briefly the folklore of St. Helena Island, with enough illustrative material to lend concreteness to the outline. It should be read as supplementary to the larger work, *Folk-Lore of the Sea Islands, South Carolina*, by Mrs. Elsie Clews Parsons, published by the American Folk-Lore Society in 1923.

It would be proper to include in the present work an account of the customs, folkways, and mores of the Islanders, but since these are ably treated in T. J. Woofter, Jr.'s, *Black Yeomanry*, I have omitted them in order to avoid duplication.

128 I am indebted to numerous persons on St. Helena
[127] Island for generously contributing folk songs, folk tales, and other folk material; especially to Miss Rossa B. Cooley and Miss Grace B. House, principals of Penn School, for facilitating the collection of data in many ways; to Professor Reed Smith, of the University of South Carolina, for reading the section on dialect and making valuable suggestions; to Professor Arthur Palmer Hudson, of the University of Mississippi, for reading the entire manuscript and making critical notations, some of which I have incorporated into the work; to Professor Harold S. Dyer, Head of the Department of Music, University of North Carolina, for reading the section on folk songs; to Miss Katharine Jocher, of the Institute for Research in Social Science, University of North Carolina, for assistance in preparing the manuscript for the press; to

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194 126 speaker of unadulterated Gullah gives a mouth-full-of-mush effect, rolling out his short-clipped words with a rapidity which is amazing to those who think that all Negroes drawl. An accurate recording of this pure type is very difficult, and, when done, gives a peculiar result indeed. Jones, Gonzales, Whaley, and a few others have (114) succeeded very well in reducing it to writing. Their results are quite different from those of Mrs. Christensen and Mrs. Parsons, in part because the latter collected their stories from people who spoke a modified Gullah.[9]

Two persons rarely hear the same sounds exactly alike. If they do, they will probably represent them differently in writing. Some dialect writers, having achieved the "accurate recording" state of mind, carry the thing to the extreme and spell phonetically many words which are pronounced in the standard way by Negroes and white people. For example, a writer who would spell his own pronunciations of *little, victual, about,* in the standard way, is sometimes guilty of representing Negro speech as *littul* or *lit'l, vittle* or *vittul,* and *uhbout* when the Negro and the standard pronunciations are alike.

539 (19) The following specimens will not only serve to introduce the reader to the phonology, grammar, and idiom of the dialect, but will give him some idea of the variations due to locality and to the method of recording.

I[10]

Buh Lion bin a hunt, an eh' spy Buh Goat duh leddown' topper er big rock duh wuk eh mout an der chaw. Eh creep up fuh

(576) [9] Like everyone else, these Negroes have "company manners." When talking to a stranger, especially to a white man, they tend to tone down their speech so that it is more easily understood than is their ordinary conversation with one another.

(113) [10] From Jones, *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast,* p. 38. Explanatory notes are printed below each of the excerpts which follow.

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533 (178) tunes! The frequency of the pentatonic in the 527 spirituals[55] studied by Krehbiel was 25.1 per cent. Thus the proportion of pentatonics was nearly twice as high in the spirituals from other sections as in those from St. Helena. The recent collection made on St. Helena by Ballanta, however, contains a very high proportion of pentatonic tunes—46 per cent.[56] Furthermore, as was pointed out in a previous connection, practically every song recorded by Allen sixty-two years before had been forgotten or was sung only rarely when Ballanta made his collection. In other words, a new crop of songs had come to the front since the Civil War, and the proportion of pentatonics had increased. Did this new crop originate on St. Helena? It is extremely unlikely that it did. In a collection of spirituals made by Miss Mary A. Grissom in Kentucky, about half of the songs are the same as those now sung on St. Helena.[57] If these originated on St. Helena since the Civil War, how does it happen that they got over to Kentucky without being picked up *en route* by some of the

[55] Including the Allen collection.

[56] *Too* high, as the St. Helena folk would say. I am convinced that, while (114) there has been an increase in the proportion of pentatonics on the island, it is not this great. Ballanta, a native African, must have been so accustomed to a pentatonic scale that he heard some of the spirituals as pentatonic when they were really not. In several instances I found that he had written without fourths and sevenths tunes in which I heard distinctly one of these tones. I have verified this by the phonograph records which I made on the island. In all my analyses I have used a very strict definition of the pentatonic. If either the fourth or the seventh tone occurs, even only once, in any way other than as a very light passing tone, I do not class a tune as pentatonic, but put it under another head, as "no fourth" or "no seventh" or "regular major." Krehbiel used a less strict definition, for I counted the pentatonics in half of the songs which he used and obtained 19.5 per cent where he obtained 25.1 per cent. Thus Krehbiel, if he had analyzed my white revival songsters, would have found a higher proportion of pentatonics than I did.

[57] Grissom, *The Negro Sings a New Heaven*, University of North Carolina Press, 1930.

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533 191 *I'm So Glad Trouble Don't Last Always*, for example, the pattern is A - B - A - C, that is, the first and third phrases are the same, while the second and fourth are different. This pattern is found in nearly fifty per cent of the spirituals. If the three patterns, A - B - A - C, A - B - A - B, and A - B - C - D, be taken out, only a handful of spirituals remain for other patterns. The same holds true for white revival songs and folk songs, and it cannot be argued that there is any particular melodic pattern which is peculiar to the spirituals.

533 *Harmony.* A thorough consideration of all the questions centering around the harmonies of the spirituals would involve a long technical discussion which would go beyond the limits of this treatise. In brief, it may be pointed out (1) that the testimony of the majority of the early travelers in Africa is to the effect that singing in harmony seems to have been rare or poorly developed in West Africa;[66] (2) that on the Sea Islands, where contact with white music has been limited and where the Negroes should have preserved their African harmonies if they had any, the spirituals are usually sung in unison[67]

[66] Consult Wallaschek, *Primitive Music.*

[67] The same observation was made by Allen in *Slave Songs* and by Miss Towne in her *Letters and Diary.* In *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, James Weldon Johnson says that Allen probably was mistaken, that the Negroes sang in harmony but that it was bizarre and Allen did not appreciate it. I am convinced that Allen knew what he was talking about, for I can vouch for the fact that during a residence of nearly four months on St. Helena, I never heard a single spiritual sung in full harmony by the ordinary untrained folk in the schools, churches, and praise houses. Sometimes I heard a girl attempting an alto part, but it was always the conventional alto of white songs. It was a revelation to listen to a member of the Penn School Quartet attempt to teach a quartet of boys from an outlying school the simple harmonies for a spiritual which they were going to sing in a quartet contest. To those who like to say, "Get four Negro boys together and you have a quartet," I would say, true of the Negro boys and true of white boys—*provided the boys are familiar with the old reliable harmonies.*

[114]

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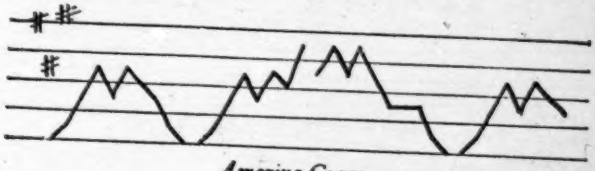
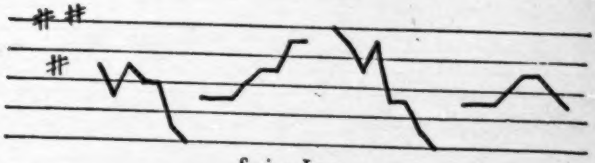
The rhythmic changes which took place in the songs borrowed from white people are significant. They account for some of the difficulty one encounters in tracing melodic parallels. To cite an instance of this sort: there is evidence that, omitting rhythmic factors, the old favorite, *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,* is a variant of one of the tunes of *Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound.* The following tune graph, which represents the melody but neglects tempo, shows this possibility.[103]



Amazing Grace



Swing Low

Summary and Conclusion

The examples cited above illustrate various types of borrowing: (1) both tune and words borrowed with very little alteration; (2) tune alone borrowed, and melodic or rhythmic adaptations introduced by Negroes; (3) a short phrase of a white tune used as the basis for a spiritual tune,

[103] In this connection I might state that R. W. Gordon, of the Archive of American Folk-Song, Library of Congress, told me that he has a traditional white version of *Swing Low.* This may be a connecting link between *Amazing Grace* and the spiritual. I am aware that it has recently been claimed that the original tune of *Swing Low* has been found in Africa, but I consider the claim of no value until some direct evidence is presented.

[114]

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III

FOLKLORE FROM ST. HELENA ISLAND

INTRODUCTION

In the Sea Islands one may hear stories and superstitions that are rooted in the far distant childhood of the human race, folklore from Africa, Asia, Spain, England, and other parts of the globe. Story-telling is not a lost art with the Negroes. A stranger may have some difficulty in getting them started, but after he has lived among them for a while he meets with immediate response to any request for stories, riddles, "toasts," and the like. 538

In her book, *Folklore of the Sea Islands, South Carolina,* Elsie Clews Parsons has brought together nearly 200 stories, numerous riddles, proverbs, rhymes, etc., the majority of which were collected on St. Helena Island. Mrs. Parsons' stay in the Sea Islands was very brief, but she collected a remarkable amount of material. Such shortcomings as her book shows are insignificant and are due to the difficulty of getting accurate data without living for a longer period among the people. For example, she said of a certain opening rhyme used in the Bahama Negro tales, that there was no trace of it in the sea-island stories. I found this rhyme to be fairly common on St. Helena and on Ladies Island, but I had been there nearly two months before I ever heard of it. 114 538

Mrs. Parsons thought that song, as a part of the narrative, "is passing or has passed out" in the Southern States. She recorded only six or seven instances of stories with sung portions. I found about three times as many,

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114 538 and I believe that a diligent search among the less sophisticated islanders will reveal about as high a proportion of this type of story as is found in the Bahamas and West Indies.

114 538 831 Mrs. Parsons also believed that obscene turns, so common in the Bahamas, were "quite lacking in Carolina." This might have been true as far as she could tell, for the Negroes were undoubtedly inhibited in the presence of a woman collector. I found their stories and riddles quite rich in *double entente* and obscene turns, and the most vulgar story I heard was told me by a 16-year-old school girl. Many stories have their "other" versions. On several occasions, men or boys told the conventional versions if girls were present, and then took me aside to tell me the tabooed versions. These were often merely risqué or vulgar rather than truly obscene, but there was plenty of the latter to disprove Mrs. Parsons' idea. Indeed, whether she knows it or not, her book contains a considerable quantity of vulgar folklore.

538 128 Because of the existence of Mrs. Parsons' excellent book, it is unnecessary to give in detail in the present report all of the folklore collected on St. Helena Island. A few typical stories, riddles, beliefs, etc., are sufficient here. For further details and for a larger bibliography of Negro folklore, one may consult Mrs. Parsons' work. 538 113 *Black Yeomanry*, by T. J. Woofter, Jr., and *A Social History of the Sea Islands*, by Guion Griffis Johnson, companion volumes to this one, contain much valuable material relating to folkways on St. Helena Island.

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IX

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PLAYING DEAD IN THE ROAD[6]

Once a man been fishin' an' had a cyaart load o' fish. Buh Rabbit lay down side o' de road like 'e daid. De cyaart go by, an' den Buh Rabbit run t'rough de woods an' lay down 'side de road again. Cyaart come along an' de man say, "How come so many rabbit daid een de road today. If I see anudder one, I pick um up." Buh Rabbit run roun' an' lay down 'side de road again. W'en de man come along he say, "I never see so many daid rabbit. I t'ink I bigin to pick um up." So he pick up Buh Rabbit an' t'row 'im up on de cyaart wid de fish.

Buh Rabbit t'row off fish an' t'row off fish till he got all he want, den he jump off an' go back an' pick up de fish an' take um home. Buh Wolf come along an' see all de fish. He want to know how Buh Rabbit got um. Buh Rabbit say, "Man, I play like I daid, an' de man put me on de cyaart, and I t'row off de fish." So nex' day Buh Wolf done de same trick. De man stopped de cyaart, say, "Well, Buh Rabbit fool me dat way, but you no fool me," an' he beat Buh Wolf to deat' an' carry 'im home fo' he chillun.

X

FATAL IMITATION[7]

Buh Rabbit see Buh Pa'tridge one day, an' Buh Pa'tridge had 'e haid undah 'e wing. Buh Rabbit say, "Buh Pa'tridge, weh yo' haid?" Buh Pa'tridge mek answer, "I leff um at home, Buh Rabbit." "You leff um

[191]
[114]

[6] From Edisto Island. An unusual variant of "Playing Dead Twice in the Road," which is quite popular in the Bahamas, according to Parsons, but which she failed to find in the Sea Islands. See *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands*, p. 44.

[7] *Cf.* Parsons, pp. 33-5.

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Some families still cover up all mirrors and stop the clocks in the house for a time after a death. Mrs. King related that an old woman showed her some spots on a mirror, saying that the spots were eyes of spirits which came back because the mirror was not covered. The water used to bathe the dead person must be disposed of carefully, for to step over the place where it is poured will cause boils and sores on the legs. 764 [753]

A list of all the other beliefs surviving in the Negro culture of St. Helena Island would fill a small volume. Since there is little in them which differs from Southern Negro folk beliefs in general, it is not worth while to include them here. Mrs. Parsons' work may be consulted for further St. Helena beliefs, and Puckett's *Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro* may be consulted for a detailed discussion of the whole field of Negro superstition. 128 [171] [114].

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(1525-ca. 1880)
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567

The prices in Beaufort District, and, therefore, on St. Helena Island, followed closely the prices at Charleston, which were uniformly above the Virginia market but below that of New Orleans. The following table represents the investment in slaves of one planter in Beaufort District about 1860, James Gregorie, of Greenwood plantation. The prices may be taken as an average of prices for the district, and the proportion of prime hands, those valued at more than $1,000, to the entire holding as the average for the district.

VALUE OF SLAVES ON GREENWOOD PLANTATION IN 1860[22]

Value in dollars	Number	Per Cent
None	15	10.4
1-100	1	0.7
100-200	9	6.3
200-300	6	4.2
300-400	12	8.3
400-500	16	11.1
500-600	4	2.8
600-700	10	6.9
700-800	12	8.3
800-900	26	18.0
900-1,000	7	4.9
1,000-2,000	25	17.4
2,000	1	0.7
Total	144	100.0

Mr. Gregorie estimated the market value of his 144 slaves in 1860 to be $85,450. The average value of all his slaves was $593.40,[23] but the average price of the saleable slaves was $662.40. Fifty per cent of them would bring on the market something more than seven hundred dollars; while ten per cent had no market value whatever and

[22] MS in Gregorie Papers.

[23] Gregorie's estimate is probably too high. James Hamilton Couper, of Hopeton plantation, Glynn County, Ga., estimated the average price of the more than five hundred slaves on the plantation under his management to be $450.

[114]